

Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO)
Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services
Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP)

Transportation Equity *Island Style*



Source: Maribeth Crandell, Island Transit

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Table of Contents

1	Island CPT-HSTP Contact Information	3
2	Plan Purpose	4
3	Region Map	5
4	Acronyms Used	6
5	Who Does This Plan Serve?	7
6	Coordination And Inclusion	12
7	Engagement	13
8	Demographics	21
9	Common Origins	29
10	Common Destinations	41
11	Existing Transportation Services	52
12	Unmet Transportation Needs	69
13	Technology-Based Solutions	83
14	Coordination With Emergency Management Agencies	85
15	Strategies to Meet Public Transportation Needs	89
16	Community Project Priorities	95
17	Ongoing Coordination	99
18	Potential Special Needs Transportation Projects	101

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Island County

City of Oak Harbor

Town of Coupeville

City of Langley

Island County Public Transportation Benefit Area (Island Transit)

Port of Coupeville

Port of South Whidbey

WSDOT, Mount Baker Area

Naval Air Station Whidbey

Plan Purpose

The CPT-HSTP is a planning tool to assist the IRTPO in identifying public transportation needs and creating improvement recommendations to benefit people with disabilities, seniors, young people, individuals with lower incomes, and others who depend on public transportation services. This plan, developed in conjunction with stakeholders, service providers, public transportation users, and others, can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, encourage cost-effective transportation services, and identify priorities for Island Region (see Map 1). It also identifies strategies, activities and/or specific projects that may be eligible for funding under WSDOT's Consolidated Grant Program (that includes funding from state and federal sources) or other funding sources.

Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

Transportation-disadvantaged people are those who have specialized transportation needs due to their health, age, income or other factors that prevent them from being able to freely transport themselves. Washington State Law, RCW 81.66.010, states that people with special transportation needs are "those people, including their attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status or age, are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation." This plan will also refer to "special needs transportation" and "vulnerable transportation system users" when discussing transportation-disadvantaged individuals and populations. Transportation-disadvantaged people have the same mobility needs as the general public but face significant barriers to travel due their mobility challenges. This plan looks at where transportation disadvantaged groups are found in Island Region, services currently available for them, the network of agencies that serve them, organizations and individuals who advocate for them, and existing needs and gaps which reduce their ability to get to where they need and want to go.

The Planning Team

This document references the "planning team" to better identify the group involved in collecting data, making recommendations, and developing the plan itself. Many agencies and organizations were involved in the development of the Island CPT-HSTP and/or the Special Needs Transportation Planning project that provided the core data for the plan. The Transportation Equity Committee (TEC), see Appendix F, was a key resource throughout the process. The Island CPT-HSTP was informed and ultimately approved by the IRTPO Executive Board.

Map of Island Region

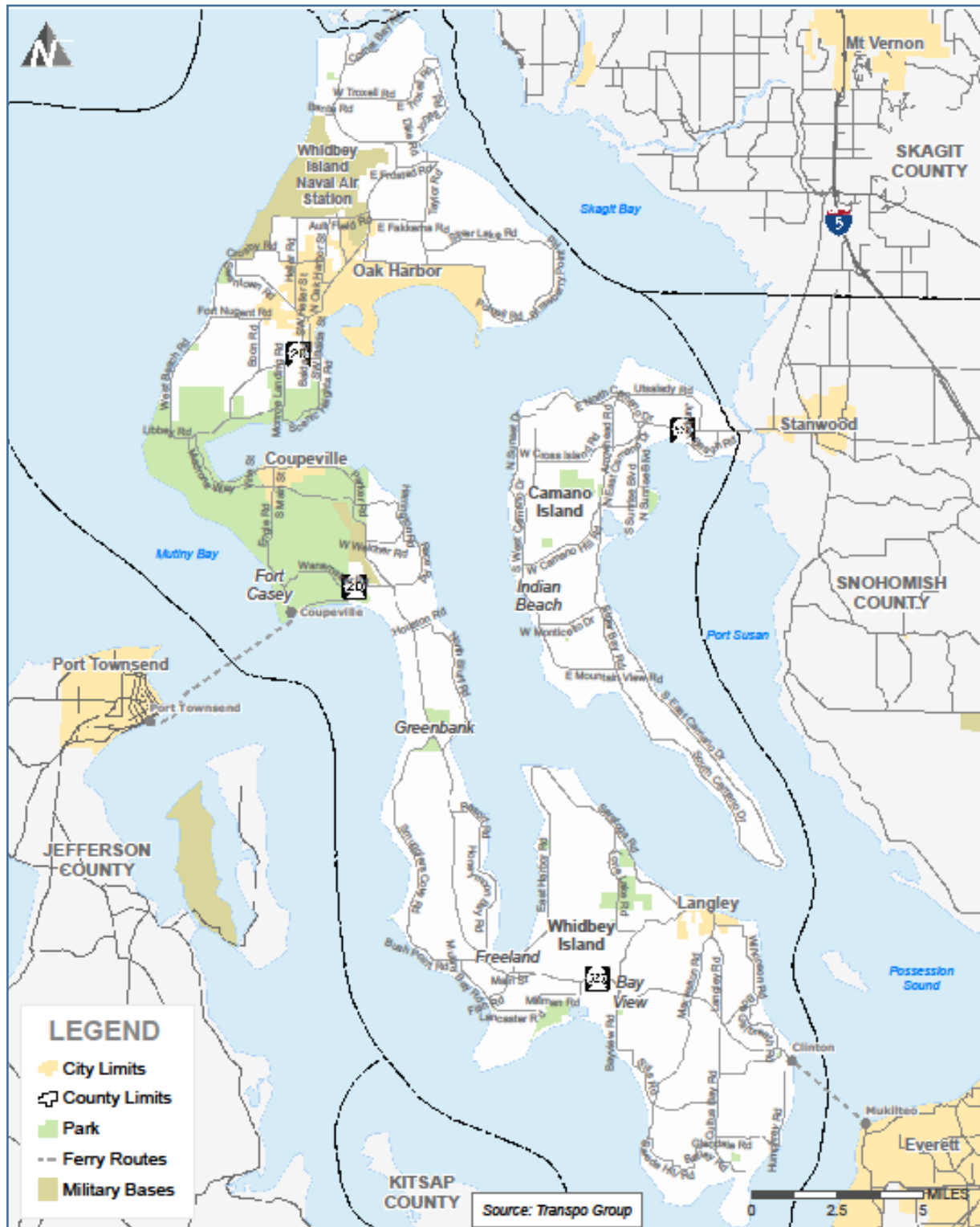


Figure 1. Island Region map. Island Region is coincident with the boundaries of Island County and includes Whidbey and Camano Islands. Island County is one of the jurisdictions within Island Region.

Acronyms Used

ACS – American Community Survey

CPT-HSTP – Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

IRTPO (or Island RTPO) – Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization

LEP – Limited English Proficiency

NCTC – North Counties Transportation Coalition

NMUGA – Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area

NSTA – North Sound Transportation Alliance

OFM – Office of Financial Management

RAID – Rural Area of Intense Development

TAC – Technical Advisory Committee

TEC – Transportation Equity Committee

TEN – Transportation Equity Network

WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation

WSHSTP – Washington State Human Services Transportation Plan

Who Does This Plan Serve?

*"There is very little published research addressing transportation disadvantaged populations . . . To date, many hypothesized links between transport, accessibility, mobility, subjective well-being and social exclusion remain unexplored"*¹

Wasfi, et al 2007

Introduction

Transportation Equity-Island Style was developed to be a resource for Island Region communities to understand and address transportation barriers for those with limited options to manage them. Barriers may result from physical disabilities, cognitive issues, age, economic circumstances, or language differences. Some of those barriers are likely to become direct issues for all of us at some point in our lives.

Indirectly, it is important to consider that transportation barriers could have a series of consequences impacting the general health and prosperity of our Island communities. People who can't reach the doctor, may end up unfit to work and in turn unable to provide for a family. Intervention for the family may eventually come, but late intervention creates unnecessary suffering and escalates costs.

The next subsections provide a snapshot of six categories of transportation disadvantaged groups and some articles and resources relevant to those populations. Additional categories exist, including some that are discussed in this plan such as individuals with language barriers and Native American residents experiencing transportation barriers. Transportation related articles and resources were not found for these categories and it is hoped that more information will be available in the future.

Older Residents

*"[We] need to break down the silos between housing, transportation, health care, and long-term services and supports in order to support healthy aging."*²

¹ Delbosc A., Currie G. (2018) Accessibility and Exclusion Related to Well Being. In: Friman M., Ettema D., Olsson L.E. (eds) Quality of Life and Daily Travel. Applying Quality of Life Research (Best Practices). Springer, Cham https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-76623-2_4

² 2015 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) <https://whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/2015-WHCOA-Final-Report.pdf>

With its picturesque shorelines, farmlands and destination parks, and given a generally mild climate, Island Region is an attractive location to age in place or move to when retiring. And the data suggests that people are doing just that. However, transportation can be a barrier for older individuals and the rural character of the islands offers fewer transportation options and limited nearby services compared with mainland locations.

Driving is the primary mode of transportation in rural communities, but the task becomes increasingly difficult as we age. Low light conditions, headlight glare, and recognizing the flash of brake lights are much more challenging for people at 55 or 60 versus a younger driver. Eventually, driving stops being an option for all of us.

For those over 65 who do not drive, more than half are stuck at home on most days. This may be because they are unaware of other transportation options or because they are too disabled to use available services. "Next to health, transportation is the most important issue for seniors."³

Resources

- Seniorliving.org <https://www.seniorliving.org/lifestyles/personal-transportation/>
- FHWA <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/07mar/03.cfm>
- Area Agency On Aging – Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) <https://www.nwrcwa.org/>
- 2015 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) <https://whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/2015-WHCOA-Final-Report.pdf>
- U.S. DOT National Aging and Disability Transportation Center <https://www.nadtc.org/>
- Senior ride-sharing article <https://www.after55.com/blog/senior-transportation-uber-lyft/>

People with Developmental Disabilities

Transportation independence is critical to the overall physical, social, and psychological health of people with developmental disabilities. Developmental disabilities begin before adulthood and impact multiple arenas of one's life such as language, learning, physical mobility, and independent living. The lifelong limitations experienced by this population mean such individuals rely on the help of others to meet their transportation needs. Half of the participants in a study of vision-impaired populations used the local bus as the primary mode of transportation and some 80% were frustrated by the need to rely on others to get around. Some of the most

³ Seniorliving.org <https://www.seniorliving.org/lifestyles/personal-transportation/>

dependent individuals with cognitive or behavioral limitations, likely have even fewer independent travel options.

Resources

- Measuring the Transportation needs of people with developmental disability (includes US DOH and CDC definitions and literature review)
<https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/179821/Disability.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

People with acquired disabilities

The transportation concerns of people with acquired disabilities vary considerably due the different types and severities of impairment they experience. Some disabled individuals may have a limited ability to drive, while others may rely solely on other transportation services. Still others may experience some of the same limitations as developmentally disabled individuals. There are many complex transportation issues impacting individuals with acquired disabled including whether or not a given person qualifies for specialized services or if services are available when and where they need them.

Finding transportation options for people with disabilities can be challenging. Limitations include having adequate vehicle accommodations for certain physical disabilities, and finding volunteers who are physically able to assist disabled individuals or who are comfortable transporting people with certain types of cognitive and/or social/emotional disabilities.

Resources

- National Center on Workforce and Disability
http://www.onestops.info/article.php?article_id=124

Veterans with Unmet Transportation Needs

Island Region is home to many of our nations veterans. Some of our veterans served as far back as World War II, while the service of many others is more recent. Certainly, not all veterans have special transportation needs, but many have physical or emotional limitations that may stem from the conflicts they have participated in. Others may be experiencing financial hardships or have



acquired disabilities as a result of age or other circumstances. In this way, the transportation needs of veterans are similar to those of other identified special needs populations. However, veterans often depend on the services provided by the United States Government and many of these are located outside Island Region and so require long trips across multiple counties. Focusing on veterans with special transportation needs as a separate population, ensures that we look for solutions that fit the more specific needs of this group.

Island Region is a preferred area for a number of homeless veterans. As a group, homeless veterans may share certain characteristics, such as reluctance to live in more densely populated areas that would be helpful to understand when considering transportation options.

Low Income Individuals and Families

Rural transportation is generally centered on automobile travel. Where public transit is available, it has been shown that only 4% of rural households utilize it versus 31% in urban areas. For low income individuals and families, access to a vehicle may be limited. And the financial burden for those who continue to rely on automobile travel may be second only to housing costs. When driving is not possible, low income individuals may have limited access to job opportunities at restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, etc. that offer shift work outside of the normal workday transportation service window. Limited transportation options are associated with a number of health related concerns including missed or delayed medical appointments and poor access to nutritious foods. Transportation has even been shown to be a

barrier to children from low income families from participating in sports. Where access to transit is convenient, single parents with young children may still struggle to manage transit trips.

Whether low income or otherwise, some individuals and families may find themselves homeless. Mental illness and drug addiction may be a root cause of homelessness for some, while others may just be unable to make ends meet. Whatever the cause, specialized transportation services for the homeless can be critical to accessing food, resources, and shelter.

Resources

The Transportation Barrier

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/08/the-transportation-barrier/399728/>

- Promising Practices for Increasing Access to Transportation in Rural Communities
http://www.norc.org/PDFs/Walsh%20Center/Rural%20Evaluation%20Briefs/Rural%20Evaluation%20Brief_April2018.pdf
- Rural Transportation Toolkit: <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits>
- Role of Transportation in Addressing Barriers to Economic Opportunity: <http://www.moving2work.org/brief2.html>
- Why Low-Income and Food-Insecure People are Vulnerable to Poor Nutrition and Obesity: <http://frac.org/obesity-health/low-income-food-insecure-people-vulnerable-poor-nutrition-obesity>

Disadvantaged and Homeless Youth

While the transportation issues facing disadvantaged youth often overlap with those of low-income individuals and families, special consideration should be given to this group given the profound effect early life experiences can have later in life. Transportation barriers for young people may limit access to school related activities, jobs and other social and recreational opportunities. And a missed school bus may leave no other means of reaching school for disadvantaged youth in rural areas.

We may be less likely to recognize homeless youth when we see them, but their challenges are significant. School officials may be aware of which students are homeless, but others, including many teachers may not be. All the transportation barriers facing disadvantaged youth apply to this group, but they are likely compounded by increased life uncertainty and social/emotional challenges that make need for transportation options even more apparent.

Coordination and Inclusion

The Island CPT-HSTP was developed after outreach to, and with input from, a wide range of organizations, agencies, institutions and transportation service providers. As a prelude to plan development, considerable effort was made to identify a special needs transportation network that could inform plan development and be an ongoing resource for the exchange of information and for promotion of opportunities to address special needs transportation issues. The Island Transportation Equity Network (TEN) was the result of that effort.

The TEN was both an information/data resource and its members provided the boots on the ground needed to collect information from end-users of the transportation system. Outreach for the TEN was very broad. For instance, all four tribes with a potential interest in Island Region were contacted. Only the Samish Indian Nation expressed interest in our network at this time. In addition, outreach was made to over 100 church organizations who might provide transportation services and a few of these indicated an interest in special needs transportation. In addition to some individual users of the system, the current TEN includes representatives from the following:

Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse	Oak Harbor Public Schools
Camano Center	Oak Harbor Senior Services
Camano Community and Family Health	Oak Harbor Youth Coalition
Church on the Rock, Oak Harbor	Opportunity Council
City of Oak Harbor Senior Services	People First
Compass Health	Ryan's House for Youth
Coupeville School District	Samish Indian Nation
Garage of Blessings	Sea Mar Behavioral Health
Good Cheer Food Bank & Thrift Store	Senior Services of Island County
Gov. Committee for Disability & Employment	Service Alternatives
Help House (Food Bank)	Skookum Contract Services
International Institute of Reflexology	Sno-Isle Library
Island Church	South Whidbey School District
Island County Assessment & Healthy Communities	Spin Café Day Shelter
Island County Housing Authority	St. Augustine's in-the-Woods Episcopal Church
Island County Human Services	Stanwood Camano Community Resource Center
Island County Juvenile Court Services	Stanwood-Camano School District
Island County Public Works	Sunrise Services, Inc
Island County Readiness to Learn	The Haven Shelter
Island Senior Services	United Way of Island County
Island Transit	Whidbey Homeless Coalition
New Leaf, Inc	WhidbeyHealth Foundation
Oak Harbor Church of Christ	WhidbeyHealth Transitions of Care & Clinical Informatics
Oak Harbor Disabled American Veterans Organization	WSDOT Public Transportation

Engagement

Interim Committee and Special Needs Transportation Planning Grant

In 2016, the newly forming IRTPO established an interim Human Services Transportation Planning Committee (HSTP Committee) to address that biennium's Consolidated Grant Round. The group comprised a number of human services providers, Island Transit and non-profit organizations that provided a number of experts who could make consolidated grant project ranking recommendations to the IRTPO Executive Board. It was intended that the HSTP Committee would be an ongoing work group focused on people with special transportation needs. This interim committee provided Island RTPO with a strong starting point for outreach efforts in 2018. Note, the interim committee was officially established as the Transportation Equity Committee (TEC) in September 2018 and will be referred to as the TEC in this document.

One of the 2016 Consolidated Grant Projects that received funding was the Special Needs Transportation Planning Project. This planning project had three primary goals:

- Identify a stakeholder network
- Inventory transportation assets
- Determine regional transportation needs for special needs populations in the Island Region

Establishing the Transportation Equity Network (TEN)

The TEC was invaluable for identifying potential members of the larger contact resource, later to be called the Transportation Equity Network (TEN). This early outreach (see sample, appendix A) provided an opportunity to educate stakeholders, receive new stakeholder recommendations, and learn of new resources that would inform the planning process.

General Engagement Strategy

The overall outreach and engagement strategy consisted of three components:

1. **Interviews** Targeted stakeholder interviews to further define the outreach process through interviews with experts in special needs and human services transportation.
2. **Workshops** Listening workshops to reach out to local social service providers, transportation providers, and those who need help with transportation.

3. **Survey** A community survey provided online and in person, in Spanish and English, to gather feedback from the broader community.

The goal of this outreach was to gather both broad special needs transportation perspectives and more focused community perspectives on transportation services provided in Island Region. An additional goal was to begin defining regional needs and gaps. Specifically, IRTPO looked for feedback from the following:

- People and their caregivers who may have difficulty meeting their transportation needs
- Health care specialists
- Transportation service providers
- Organizations that serve special needs populations

Targeted Stakeholder Interviews

Targeted stakeholder interviews (see summary Box 1 page 14 & 15) were conducted in small group settings (three to four people) with experts in the area of Special Needs Transportation Services/Human Services Transportation. These interviews were conducted prior to the development of listening workshops and were intended to inform those workshops with ideas and practices used in other areas. The stakeholders/agencies interviewed included WSDOT, Whatcom Council of Governments, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), 211 service provider, and Island Transit. The meeting report can be found in Appendix C.

Box 1: Summary of Targeted Stakeholder Interviews

WSDOT

Challenges

- Aging in place affects access
- Seniors struggle with technology
- More seniors mean more cognitive & mobility issues
- Safety rules are tough on rural services
- Asset management is a barrier to service provision
- Last mile connections to transit/paratransit modes are important part of a trip
- Medicare/Medicaid system to get transportation accommodations is difficult to navigate

Emerging Opportunities/Trends

- Partnerships and working as coalitions can better maximize limited resources
- Data resources are evolving

Whatcom Council of Governments

Challenges

- It is harder to serve those aging in rural areas
- Older individuals may be unaware of, and uncomfortable using services
- In rural areas have higher incidence of poverty
- Those living in rural areas may have limitations in acquiring and understanding newer technology
- Newer technology is particularly a challenge for older communities
- Broadband communication is less available in rural areas
- Cross regional travel is desirable but not accommodated by many service providers.

Emerging Opportunities/Trends

- 211 is expanding in the North Sound
- Coordinating across the region by multiple agencies, for mutually beneficial grants is an opportunity

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

Challenges

- Even with expanding transit service, needs are growing and will not be met
- Aging population is adding to demands for service

Emerging Opportunities/Trends

- PSRC has created a transit network in their regional plan to identify where fixed route service may overlap with paratransit/dial-a-ride service
- Looking where fixed route can provide some paratransit needs
- Greater interest in information technology and apps to help connect customers with services
- Using tools like Remix can help in coordinating transit planning

Box 1 continued on next page

Box 1 Continued: Summary of Targeted Stakeholder Interviews

211 service provider

Challenges

- 211 is a volunteer organization and their ability to serve customers is limited to the accuracy of the information they have from social service resources
- The 211 regions are very large with limited service to Island County
- Services provided are very broad with transportation as only a small part of their portfolio

Emerging Opportunities/Trends

- 211 is developing and hoping to expand a “navigator” type program that could provide a social services navigator in communities at a regular time and place.

Island Transit

Challenges

- Transit may be just one part of a larger problem requiring coordination of services
- Paratransit service is provided only within an area 3/4 mile of fixed route service
- Customers want to have transit that is seamless across boundaries but is currently not provided
- There are administrative, regulatory and other barriers to partnering with other transportation providers like Disabled American Veterans
- Land use patterns are not being developed to be transit friendly (dense, near stops and with comfortable accessible stops)

Emerging Opportunities/Trends

- There may be transit service by multiple providers that overlaps and could be more efficient
- Island Transit created a partnership program called RideLink that partners with non-profits where they provide a van, maintenance and training if the partners provide a driver.

Transportation Equity Network Facilitated Outreach

Activities under the Special Needs Transportation Planning project were advertised in a variety of ways (detailed in the next sections). We recognized, however, that disadvantaged populations might not respond to notices in the paper, posted flyers, email blasts, or postings on our project website. The most effective outreach strategy came from asking the TEN members to connect with the people they serve. TEN members posted flyers advertising surveys and workshops. And most importantly, TEN members worked one-on-one with their clients and other community members to complete surveys. As a result 119 surveys were completed and 64 of those

were by those who need transportation services, 45 by people who help people with special transportation needs and 10 who provide transportation services. **Table 1** pairs populations engaged via our TEN members with some example organizations from the list **on page 12**. Note that some organizations in table 1 represent several different need groups, but here they have been identified with a single group.

Table 1 Population Accessed Via TEN Member						
TEN Member	Seniors	At Risk Youth	Veterans	Low Income	Disabled	Other
	Camano Center	Ryan's House For Youth (homeless)	Island County Human Services	Opportunity Council	Service Alternatives	CADA (abuse)
	Island Senior Resources (Oak Harbor)	Public School Districts	Oak Harbor Disabled American Veterans Organization	Good Cheer Food Bank & Thrift Store	New Leaf, Inc	WhidbeyHealth (medical)
	Island Senior Resources (Bayview)	Stanwood Camano Community Resource Center (teens)		Stanwood Camano Community Resource Center	Island County Human Services	Camano Community and Family Health
		Oak Harbor Youth Coalition		Whidbey Homeless Coalition		Sea Mar Behavioral Health (substance abuse)
		Island County Juvenile Court Services		Island County Housing Authority		Island County Assessment and Healthy Communities
		Island County Readiness To Learn		United Way of Island County		Samish Indian Nation

Surveys

An online and paper survey were developed to reach the broadest possible audience. The survey was advertised on the project website, using posters (see inset, right and Appendix A) and flyers, and promoted through the TEC & TEN, email blasts, Workshops, and the Executive Board. Surveys were offered in Spanish and English and were organized around three target groups: those who need and use transportation services, those who provide transportation services, and those who help people with transportation services. The survey included multiple choice and open-ended questions, and many respondents provided written feedback on the latter. The survey was designed to take no longer than 15 minutes. It was opened in late April and continued through the end of June. The paper version, completion of which was often facilitated by TEN members, was quite popular. That version was distributed through the TEN and was also available at the Special Needs Transportation Workshops. The survey results informed the needs and gaps section of this plan. Surveys and detailed survey results can be found in Appendix C.

Workshops

Three workshops were offered that addressed the transportation concerns of special needs populations. The workshops were advertised through press releases, email blasts, the project website, and flyers distributed through our TEN members. Local newspapers on Whidbey and Camano Islands featured articles about the workshops (see Appendix A). The workshops were offered at senior centers in South Whidbey, Oak Harbor and on Camano Island, thus providing broad geographic coverage and large, comfortable and well known public meeting spaces. Workshop meeting times were also varied in an effort to capture more attendees. Members of the planning team presented details of the Consolidated Grant process, demographic data and existing conditions. Attendees were also made aware of Island Transit's current services, upcoming changes and proposals. The workshops offered an opportunity for face-to-face discussions and dialogue on transportation

Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Human Services Transportation Plan

Can all people in Island County get to where they need or want to go?

Island County is looking to better understand the travel needs of Island County residents as part of the Human Services Transportation Planning Study. Whether you need transportation services, you help someone who needs transportation services or you provide transportation, we want to hear from you. Please help us by taking this brief 15 minute survey.



Take the Survey Here!
(Use the hyperlinks below or scan the QR code with your phone to take the survey.)

Survey in English

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Island_County

Encuesta en Español

https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/IslandCounty_Spanish

More Information
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(Please contact 360.678.7959 for more information. If you have special needs that require accommodations in order to participate in this project, please contact us at 360.678.7959. We will do our best to accommodate your needs. Please do not provide any personal information to anyone who is not a member of the planning team. Your participation in this project is voluntary and your participation does not constitute an endorsement of the project by the Island County Public Works Department.)



needs with staff from WSDOT Public Transportation, Island RTPO, Island County, and Island Transit. Sixteen people attended these workshops representing schools, social services organizations, transportation providers and the public. Government sponsored open house/workshop attendance in Island Region can be hit or miss regarding participation based on experience with other public forums. While not heavily attended, these listening sessions afforded a deeper dialogue. Participants were well versed in special needs issues and brought diverse viewpoints that went beyond those that came out of the surveys. Information gathered from the workshops informed the needs and gaps section of this plan and is detailed in Appendix D.

Ride Alongs / Field Interviews

The plan development team worked with Island Transit to identify good opportunities for direct engagement with a number of individuals who likely represented vulnerable populations. This May 2018 outreach effort helped highlight the many challenges transit dependent individuals experience every day. Bus drivers and riders were interviewed at the Oak Harbor transit station and during a ride along activity. A total of six riders and two drivers provided input on transit services and transportation challenges. Those interviewed included a man making a regular trip to the Seattle Veterans Hospital, a woman who regularly travels between Everett, WA and Oak Harbor, two young men who were accessing services for the developmentally disabled and a young woman with her child. In addition to the scheduled ride along activity, two individuals from the Stanwood-Camano area spoke to plan development team members during a mobility management workshop in December 2018. Long trip times, connection concerns, communications equipment barriers, and the complexity of using paratransit were highlighted by these system users.

North Sound Transportation Alliance – Health and Transportation Workshops

Island RTPO is an active participant in the North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA)-see inset at right. In October 2017 and September 2018 NSTA held workshops focused on the role of transportation regarding the ability of special needs populations to access health care services. These meetings were heavily attended by the representatives of the five northwest counties involved in NSTA. Island Region was particularly well represented. Participants included



[Whatcom](#) • [Skagit](#) • [San Juan](#) • [Island](#) • [Snohomish](#)

The North Sound Transportation Alliance or NSTA, is a coalition of citizens, elected officials, and agency staff working to identify, advocate for, and fund important regional transportation initiatives that improve ways for people to travel through Washington State's five northwest-ern-most counties without reliance on personal vehicles.

decision makers, human services professionals, transportation providers, and those who need and use available services. Among the outreach methods used for this plan, the outcomes from those workshops (see Appendix E) yielded the most in depth look at transportation needs and gaps related to health care access. The workshops also pointed to potential strategies to address those needs/gaps.

Outreach Summary

Overall, a fairly comprehensive picture of the transportation challenges faced by special needs populations in Island Region was afforded by the combination of targeted stakeholder interviews, facilitated outreach via the TEN, surveys, workshops, ride along activities, and the NSTA workshops. Four meetings of the TEC also provided insight into what it means to be disadvantaged with respect to transportation options, and acted as a focus forum for discussing identified needs/gaps and drafting strategies to address them.

Among the groups identified as vulnerable or special needs populations, outreach may have been least effective at reaching individuals with limited English proficiency. The needs of those with language barriers were brought up by many advocates and so their recommendations are included in the plan. Workshop advertisements included Spanish messaging and surveys were produced in Spanish, but no Spanish surveys were returned. The Spanish surveys were included based on regional statistics showing that Spanish speakers exceeded a threshold of 5% of the population in Island Region. Demographic analysis showed a much higher Spanish speaking population in the City of Oak Harbor, where a relatively high Filipino population was also indicated. The planning team was unable to directly speak with individuals from either of these groups and could not be certain that outreach efforts (surveys, etc.) connected with these populations or other agencies attempting to address similar issues. In addition to strategies, to guide grant writers, this plan includes recommendations for IRTPO or community led projects, one of which would address outreach to those with language barriers.

Demographics

Demographic Profiles

The 2016 Washington Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan (WSHSTP) identified several demographics as indicators of special needs populations. These included:

- People older than 65
- Veterans
- Individuals with a disability
- Households with no access to vehicles
- Unemployed people
- Low income households
- Native Americans
- Linguistically isolated households

These same categories were examined under the IRTPO's Special Needs Transportation Planning effort. In addition to the populations mentioned, this memorandum includes, disadvantaged youth and people older than 85. The over 85 population is projected to be one of the most important demographics with respect to special needs transportation planning in Island Region.

According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), the number of people in Island County over the age of 85 is projected to increase by over 100 percent from 2015 to 2035. Figure 2 shows the projected population change in Island County from 2015 to 2035 by age. The biggest growth in population will be within the groups of people 75 years and older, indicating that specialized services for the elderly will be critical in the coming years.

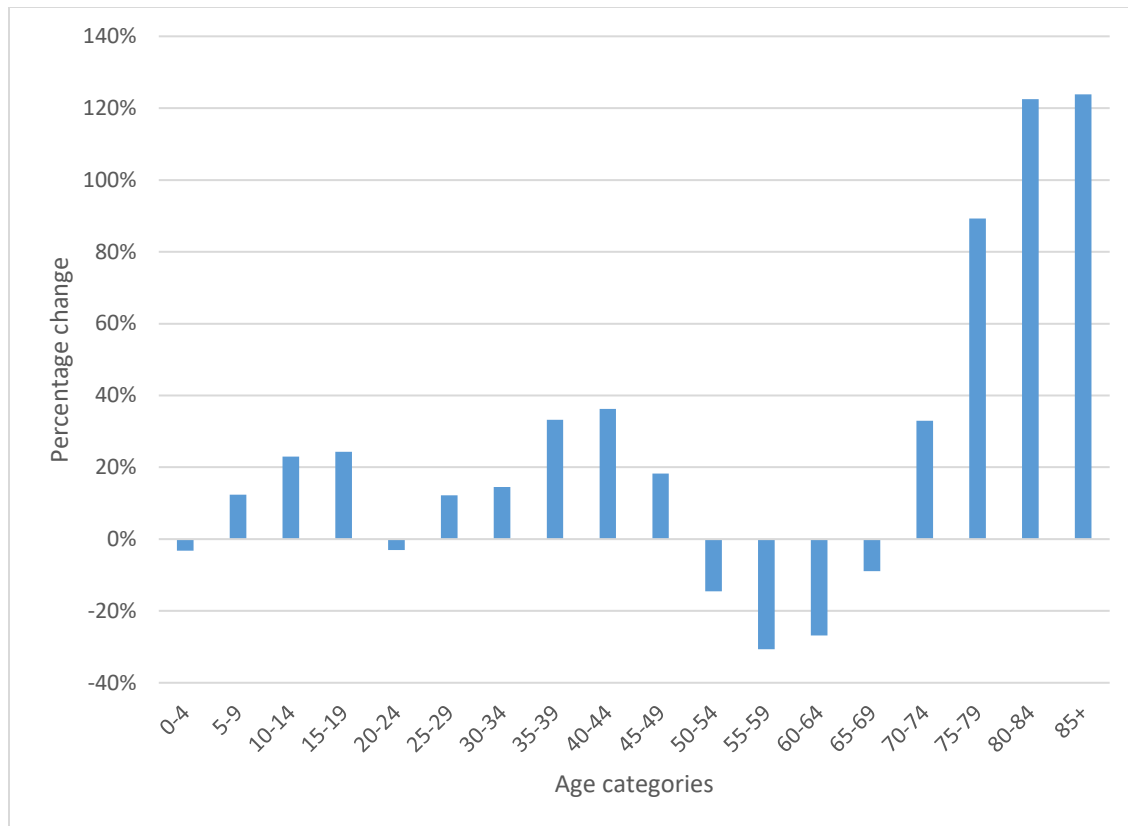


Figure 2. Island County population growth projection (2015-2035). Source OFM.

The majority of the data that was used for each demographics profile is from the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates. This dataset is the most recent for which complete demographic data for Island County exists. ACS is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and aggregated by geographic summary levels. For the purpose of the analysis, demographics data was aggregated at the U.S. Census block group level. It is also important to note that demographic data captured by the U.S. Census Bureau is self-reported. This means that residents who report having a disability do not have to meet a certain set of criteria to qualify as having a disability.

The demographic data is presented as total count per census block group in Island County as well as percent of total census block group population. These two measures were chosen to emphasize areas where overall large special needs population are concentrated (usually in dense urban areas) and to demonstrate areas with high rates relative to total population in a block group. The majority of the demographics data is presented (due to the way it was collected) on a person level, but some were presented on household or family level. A summary of demographic terms and definitions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Demographic Terms and Definitions	
Term	Definition
Census Block Group	The smallest geographic area for which census data is published, generally defined by local participants and typically containing 600 to 3,000 people. These areas are smaller in more urban areas and larger in more rural areas.
Total Count per Census Block Group	Reporting the actual number of individuals (or households) that exhibit the characteristics in question, such as presence of a disability.
Percent of Total Census Block Group Population	A calculation that shows how common it is for people (or households) to show a characteristic (such as having a disability) compared to the number of people within that block group.
Person Level Data	Data for a given condition is collected for each person
Household/Family Level Data	Data for a given condition is collected per household or per family (e.g. a household with two disabled persons present would only be counted once)

Source: United States Census Bureau

Island Region’s rural character results in census block groups that cover large geographies, and thus do not provide high levels of granularity for demographic analysis. This analysis also assumes an equal distribution of each demographic indicator across the census block groups, while in reality there may be a high concentration in one small area that is then ‘spread out’ across the block group. The demographic profiles are meant to help highlight where specialized transportation needs may be greatest, but do not provide information at a location specific level. Figure 3 shows that the demographic data point to older populations, veterans, and the disabled as having the greatest potential transportation service needs in the region.

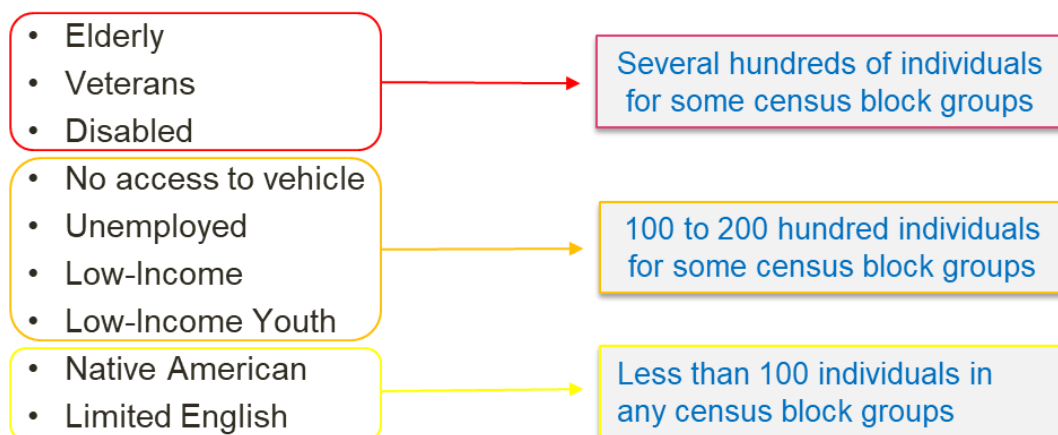


Figure 3. Populations with potential transportation service needs (shown in apparent order of impact to system)

Transportation-Disadvantaged Population Growth

Between 2010 and 2016, the total population of Island County increased by 5 percent. As shown in Figure 4, the number of seniors (65 and older) living in Island County grew from 18 percent of the total Island County population in 2010 to over 23 percent in 2016. All other special needs populations varied 1 percent or less, well within the data error range.

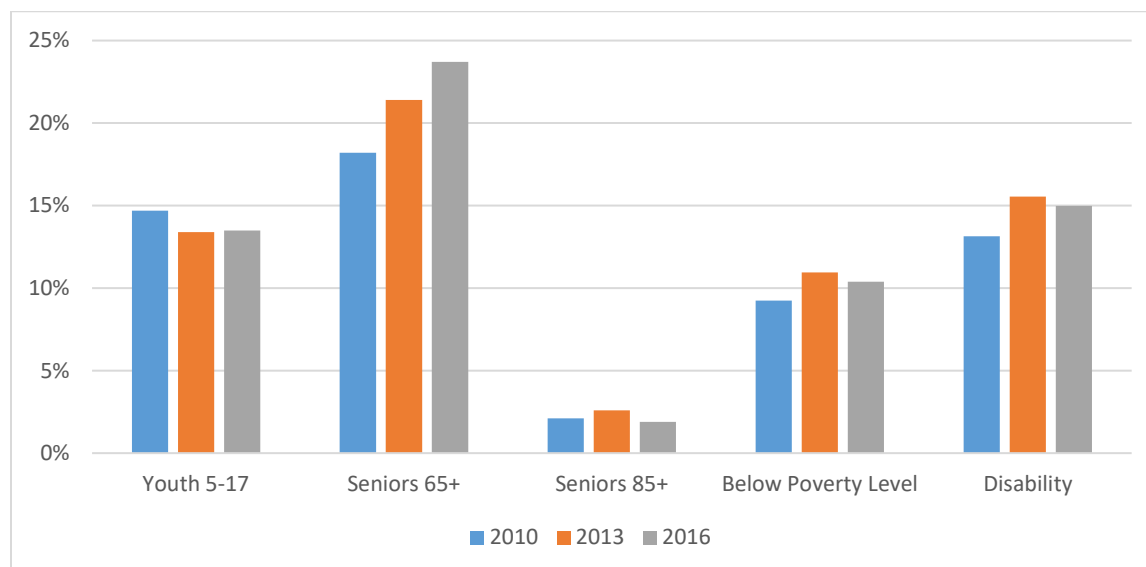


Figure 4. Change in special needs populations, 2010 - 2016. Source: Office of Financial Management.

Table 3 compares the relative population of each demographic in Island County with the Washington State average. Island County has a higher relative population of seniors, disabled persons, and veterans than the State average. However, compared to the state, Island County has fewer people lacking access to a vehicle and fewer low income families. The region also has lower number of unemployed, linguistically isolated and Native American residents versus state averages.

Demographic	Island County¹	WA State
Population Older than 65	22%	15%
Disability Status	15%	13%
Veterans	15%	8%
Low Income	10%	11%
Unemployed	4%	6%
No Access to A Vehicle	2%	3%
Native American	1%	2%
Linguistically Isolated	1%	8%

1. Red, Bold numbers denote Island County values larger than the Washington State average.

Transportation Disadvantaged Groups – Summary

The following summaries describe where a selection of the target populations are found in Island Region and some of the challenges that arise for the individuals or those who serve them. Data maps corresponding to each category are contained in Appendix B and referenced in each section. An additional map (not discussed below) depicts Unemployment population distributions.

Seniors Age 65 and Older

Island County's senior population increased from 18 percent of the total county population in 2010 to 23 percent in 2016. Moreover, the number of seniors is projected to increase by 49 percent (adding almost 9000 people) by 2035. Although many 65-year-old people enjoy mobility independence, many others will require specialized transportation services. Higher percentages of people in this age category likely indicate a greater need for specialized transportation services and senior services in general.

A look at the spatial distribution of seniors that are older than 65 years shows this to be a dominant population. In some areas seniors comprise more than 35 percent of the area's total population. On Whidbey, these locations include Keystone, Fort Casey, an area south of Greenbank along State Route 525, and east Oak Harbor. For Camano Island, the southern tip stands out.

See Map 1 A/B, Appendix B- Adults Aged 65 and Older

Seniors Age 85 and Older

In addition to people aged 65 and older, the number of people aged 85 and older provides an even stronger indication about the amount of senior mobility services needed. Island County's population of seniors aged 85 and older didn't change significantly between 2010 and 2016. In 2010, seniors of age 85 and older comprised 1.9 percent of the total population of Island County and 2.1 percent in 2016. However, this demographic category is projected to increase from approximately 2,150 people in 2015 to 4,820 people in 2035 (~125 percent increase).

The area north of Bretland on Camano Island has the highest percentage of seniors 85 and older, where they comprise 16 percent of the area's total population. Data collected as part of the outreach effort noted that this location is one of the wealthiest areas of Island County, and one of the least mobility challenged locations. The areas with the greatest density of adults 85 and older include areas west and north of Oak Harbor, Greenbank, Sunlight Beach, and Bayview areas on Whidbey Island as well as Lona Beach, and Driftwood Shores areas on Camano Island.

See Map 4 A/B, appendix B - Adults Aged 85 and Older

Veterans

A region's veteran population (those who self-report as having served in the United States Armed Forces) likely correlates with an increased need for services, including specialized transportation services. Over the last six years the number of veterans in Island County decreased from 16.6 percent in 2010 to 12.2 percent in 2016. Despite the small decrease, it is important to consider the age of Island County's veterans. 50.4 percent of Island County's 2016 veteran population is over 65 years old.

Geographically, veterans are distributed across the entire region. The areas where veterans comprise more than 20 percent of total population include Oak Harbor, east of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station - Seaplane Base, south of Deception Pass, Fort Casey, and Keystone.

See Map 2 A/B, Appendix B - Veterans in Island County

Individuals with a Disability

According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management, Island County's disability population increased from 10,333 people (comprising 13 percent of total population) in 2010 to 12,382 people (comprising 15 percent of total population) in 2015. In 2015, 1,624 people with disability were low income, 6,070 people with disability were seniors older than 65 years, and 672 people with disability were considered youth. While not all disabilities impede someone's mobility (ACS data does not specify what classifies as a disability – the disability is self-reported), many disabilities greatly limit the individual's ability to travel independently.

In Island County, some areas have one or more disabled persons in as many as 50 percent of the households in a given census block group. These areas include the location between N Oak Harbor Street and US 20, north of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station - Seaplane Base, and on the south side of Driftwood Shores. The areas with the highest number of people with a disability include Keystone, Fort Casey, south of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, east of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station - Seaplane Base, Freeland, Rockaway Beach, and south of Driftwood Shores.

See Map 3 A/B Appendix B - Individuals with a Disability

Low-Income Families

Low income families are more likely to rely on public transportation services and are a key indicator for where transit services are needed most. The population of low income individuals in Island County increased from 9.3

percent of the total population in 2010 to 10.4 percent in 2016. As of 2016, 18.1 percent of youth between 5 and 17 years old were defined as low income, and 2.3 percent of seniors 65 and older were defined as low income. This suggests that while the number of elderly residents of Island County is large and continues to grow, the relative number of elderly people who rely on transportation services (those who are low income) may be low compared to the relative number of youths who rely on transportation services.

Oak Harbor area has the highest density of low income families in Island County as well as the highest percentage of low income families from the total area's population.

See Map 7 A/B, Appendix B - Low-Income Families

Low Income Youth Age 5-17

Low income youth is a demographic that is often overlooked in specialized transportation planning. Low income youth, who are too young to have a driver license must rely on rides from parents, school buses, public transit, or bike or walk. However, some of the options might be unavailable, unreliable or unsafe in the area. One of the major issues for the younger population in Island Region is to get to/from a school since students often attend a school outside of the district where they reside.

Families below poverty level with young children are even more dependent on finding reliable transportation options. Maps were developed to show the number of families below poverty level with children as well as the percentage of those families relative to the total population. Both maps demonstrate that the low-income families with children concentrate in more urban areas that are relatively close to Oak Harbor. A notable exception to these concentrations are the homeless youth who reside at Ryan's House for Youth, a facility that provides short and transitional housing for homeless youth. This facility is located along SR 20 across the street from the Island Transit station outside of Coupeville. These youths are not captured as part of the census data.

See Map 8 A/B, Appendix B - Families with Children with Income Below Poverty Level

No Access to a Vehicle

Households with no access to a vehicle include those for which no one owns, leases or is able to access easily a vehicle for daily use. Hence, these households rely on alternative transportation options. While the total number of households that do not have access to a vehicle is relatively small in Island County, the rural nature of the county compounds the mobility challenges this presents. More urban areas have a higher percentage of households with no access to vehicles, and the majority of these households are located in the Oak Harbor area.

See Map 5 A/B, Appendix B - Households with no access to a Vehicle

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals include people who have a limited ability to speak, write or understand English. The language barrier may impact employment opportunities, access to recreation, and access to social/cultural activities. The inability to understand regional transportation information can result in fewer reliable transportation options and isolation of LEP individuals.

As of 2016, LEP individuals account for 1.6 percent of the Island County population. The highest concentration is in the Oak Harbor area. The highest percent of the households with LEP individuals is located on the north side of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station - Seaplane Base and east of US 20, with more than 20 percent of households having limited English proficiency.

See Map 10 A/B, Appendix B - Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

American Indian and Alaskan Native Population

As is the case with Veterans, Native Americans individuals are not necessarily transportation disadvantaged. However, the US DOT does recognize Native Americans to be disadvantaged as a group relative to other populations, so it is important to consider whether individuals needing transportation services in the region have access to them.

While Island Region does not contain any tribal reservation lands, tribal-owned properties exist on Whidbey and Camano Islands. In addition, several tribes have an interest in Island Region (primarily archeological) and tribal members reside on both islands. The highest density of Native Americans is found in north Oak Harbor, where the population percentage reaches over 10% for some block groups.

See Map 9 A/B, Appendix B - American Indian and Alaska Native Population

Common Origins

When referencing common origins this plan primarily considers origins to be places of residence for our special needs populations. The planning team felt it less likely that vulnerable populations addressed by the IRTPO would have common origins outside of the region given that job availability and services are more abundant in other locations.

Urban origins

Characterizing common origins for transportation disadvantaged populations in Island Region is challenging given the diversity of populations that experience transportation barriers. A high level picture could group origins into trips starting in either urban or rural locations. Urban locations are better served by fixed route transit, and many of the services needed by vulnerable populations are located in urban centers, so it is likely that many trips originate there. Primary urban centers with a relatively high number of services include:

City of Oak Harbor

Town of Coupeville

City of Langley

The City of Stanwood is a fourth urban center that is appropriate to include in this above list. Stanwood is outside of Island Region, but tightly linked with Camano Island residents.

Other urbanized areas that are relatively well served by transit, but with fewer services, include:

Freeland NMUGA

Camano Gateway

Camano Plaza

Clinton RAID

Figure 5 shows the primary urban and urbanized areas.

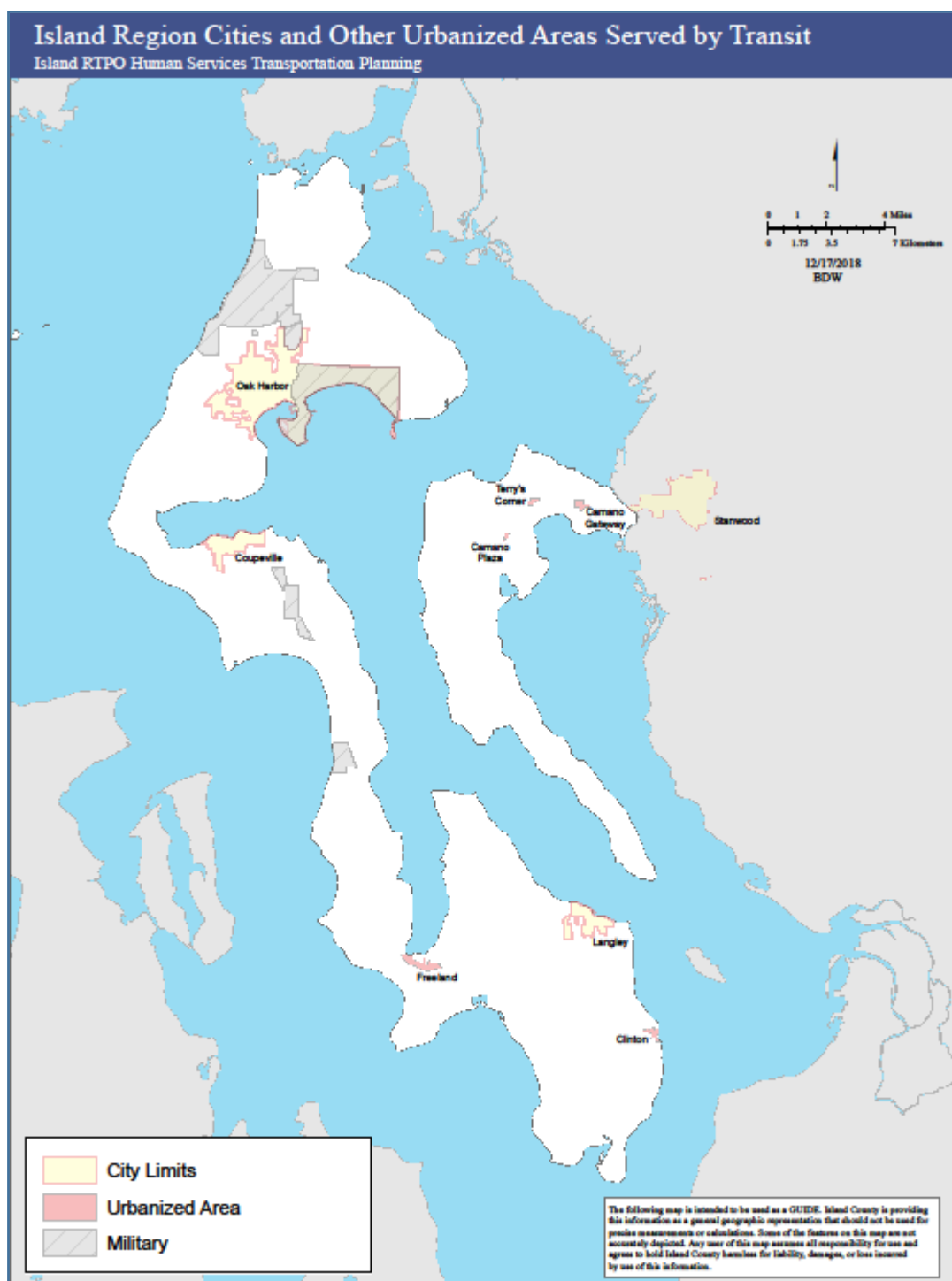


Figure 5. Cities/towns and other urbanized areas served by transit.

Rural Origins

Rural origins are harder to characterize. Thematic mapping of census block groups was performed to indicate where higher numbers of special needs populations are located in Island Region. Looking at a map of low income families (Figure 6) for example, shows that they are more often concentrated near Oak Harbor, Coupeville, the south-central area of Whidbey Island and the northernmost portion of Camano Island. The total number of low income families actually appears relatively low in Island Region.

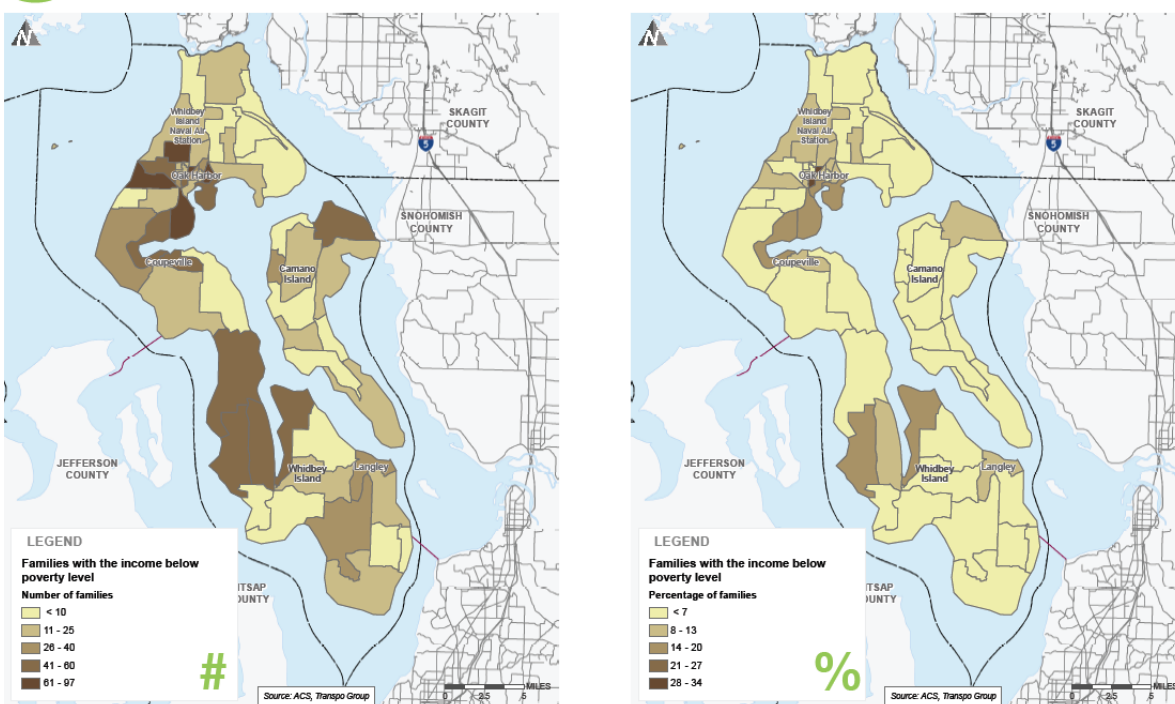


Figure 6. Families with income below poverty level, showing number of families (left) and percentage of families (right).

A somewhat different picture emerges when these families are considered as a percentage of all families. If we look at census block groups where low-income families represent 14% and above of the population, downtown Oak Harbor, the east side of Whidbey Island between Oak Harbor and Coupeville, and south-central Whidbey Island emerge. The south-central hotspot includes areas that are poorly served by transit, which is concerning when looking at rural origins.

It should be noted that mapping based on census block groups has its drawbacks in lower density communities. For instance, TEC members from the Stanwood-Camano area have called into question the observation that the northernmost portion of Camano Island is more heavily impacted by low-income families. This issue points to the need for more fine-grained data

regarding where special needs populations reside, which has been identified in the recommendations section for special needs transportation projects.

The long-narrow geography of Whidbey and Camano Islands, likely permits somewhat greater access to fixed route transit and paratransit from rural origins, though first and last mile options are needed to take advantage of this fact.

Paratransit Data

Specific origin data is available for populations eligible for paratransit because it is a door-to-door service. The detail provided by the paratransit data is valuable, but it is important to remember that it is limited to a small subset of special needs populations. Island Transit generated a report for “Assisted Living/Low Income” paratransit data for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. 7202 trips were to these housing units were completed. The data is summarized in Figure 7 below.

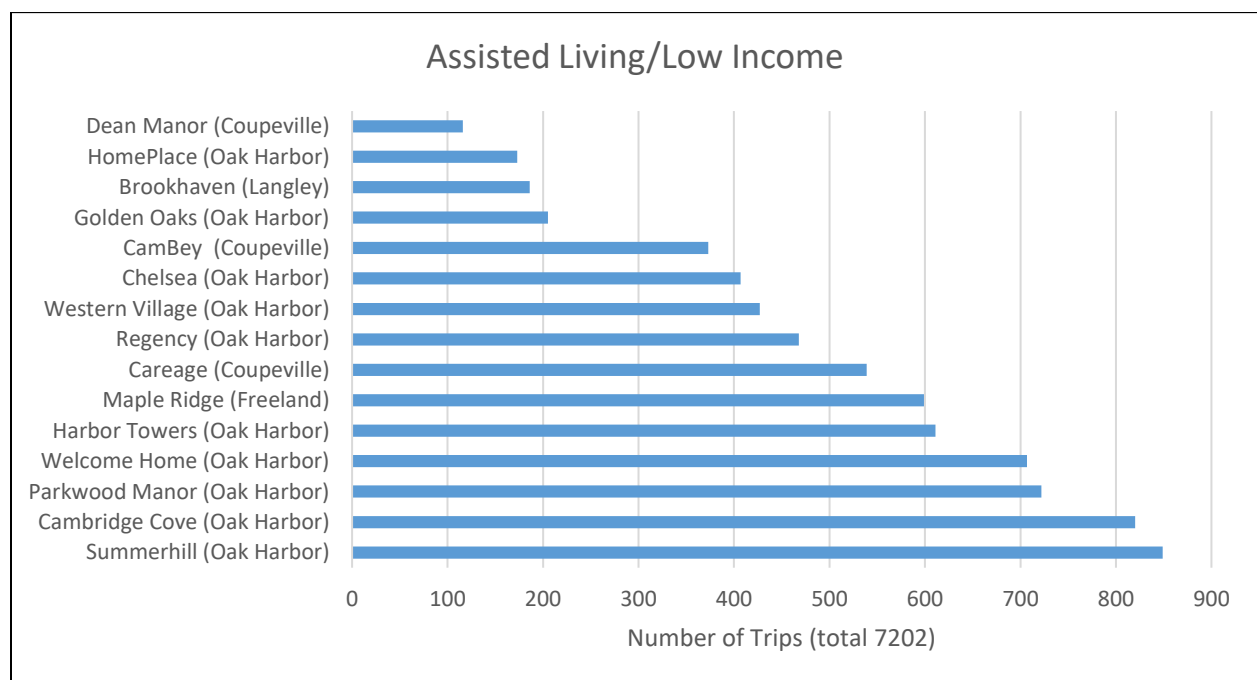


Figure 7. Assisted living and/or low-income trip origin data for Paratransit service provided by Island Transit.

At this stage in the IRTPO’s efforts to understand trip origins for vulnerable populations, our mapping efforts are tied closely to our demographic analysis. Census block groups that contain more people who are transit dependent or need other transportation services are considered common origins for vulnerable populations in Island Region.

A primary source for demographic data was the American Community Survey. We looked at other data sources, but did not find additional data that would refine our maps further. For instance, Housing and Urban Development resources show that affordable housing is found in the City of Oak Harbor, which is where our highest concentration of low-income families are located. Thus, the information did not suggest additional common origins for low-income populations.

Anecdotally, the planning team is aware of other concentrations of affordable housing (mobile home parks for instance), which do not show up on a HUD query. Other data sources such as the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Health appear similarly limited with respect to uncovering additional demographic data relevant to our rural transportation context. Once again, this plan identifies a project concept with the potential to address the need for finer grained origin data.

GIS data indicating certain kinds specialized housing options in and near Island Region were available from DSHS and others, see Figure 8. The housing depictions are helpful when considering transportation service route alignment with these origins. An interesting observation is the contrast between specialized housing availability in Island Region and the City of Everett, which is relatively close geographically. Limited transit trips to Everett are possible from Camano Island. More trip times are possible from Whidbey Island, but trip times and number of transfers can be a barrier.

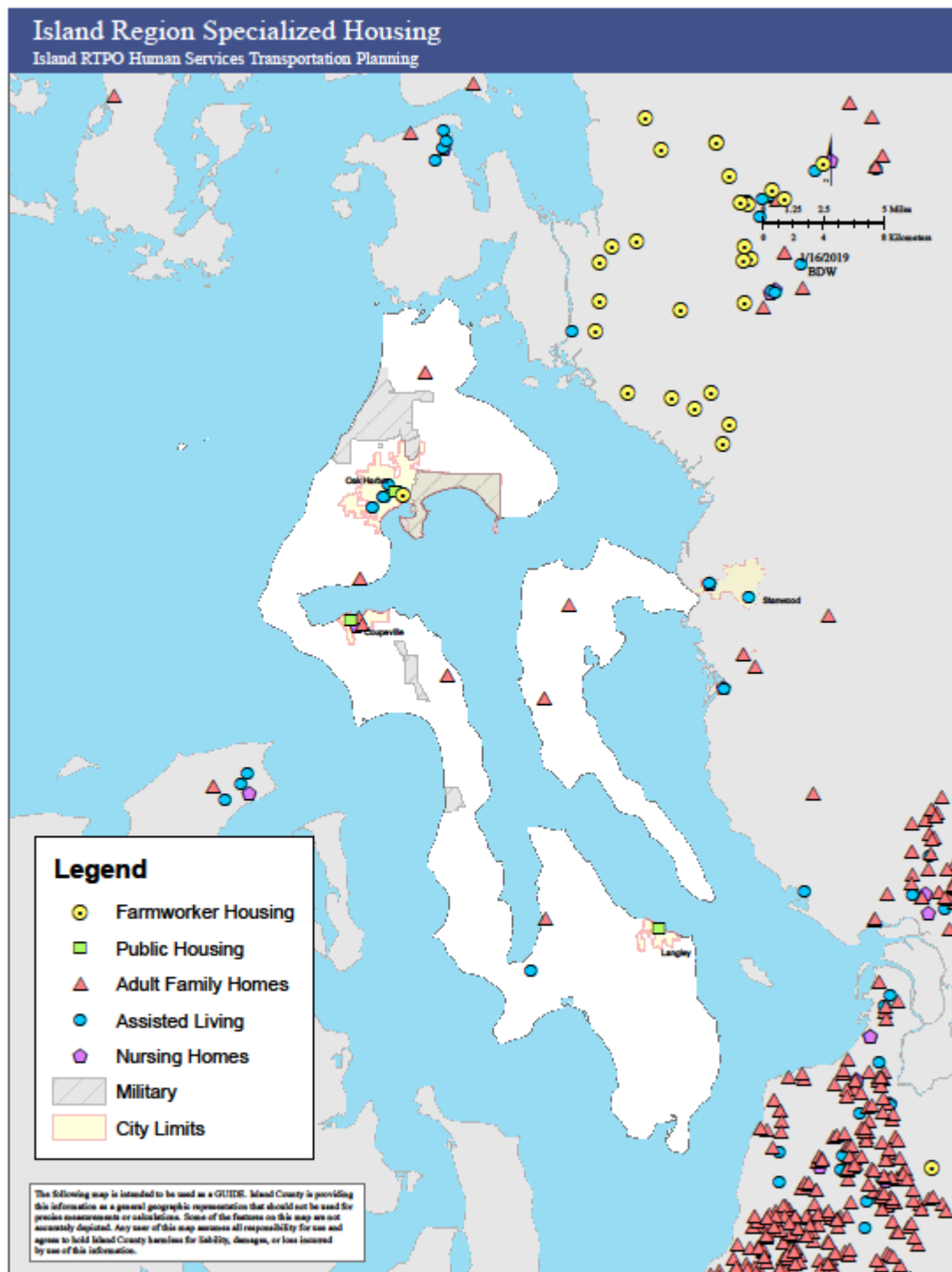


Figure 8. Common origins for specialized housing options, including affordable housing and those providing services. Overall, Island Region offers significantly less specialized housing options versus nearby Everett.

The following census block group origin/demographic maps were generated and are found in Appendix B:

- Adults age 65 or older
- Veterans in Island Region
- Individuals with a Disability
- Adults age 85 or older
- Households with No Access to a Vehicle
- Unemployed
- Low income Families
- Families with Children Under 18 Years with Income Below Poverty Level
- American Indian & Alaskan Native
- Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Figure 10 shows a dot-density map of Island Region based on the 2010 census data. Figure 11 provides a map of all residential RAIDs in Island Region where higher development densities exist and Figure 12 compares this with population density. Figure 13 shows platted areas, which also reflect development densities and Figure 14 pairs plats with population density. Using these maps in combination with those in Appendix B can help refine the question of common origins. RAIDs and density are related, but distinct. Some higher density communities are not designated as RAIDs, so further increases in density would not be permitted there. The plat map shows all development areas. An interesting example is shown by the Northgate Community, Figure 9, in north Whidbey which is a high density development that cannot otherwise expand. The Northgate Community is located on a transit line, offers relatively affordable housing and is likely to be an important origin with respect to this plan. Communities such as Northgate underscore the need for more fine-grained data.

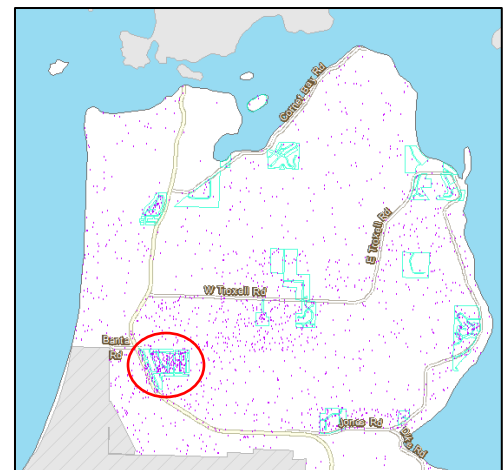


Figure 9. A plat map of northern Whidbey Island, showing the Northgate Community (red circle). This high density community offers relatively affordable single family housing and is adjacent to SR 20 and a transit stop. This development is not within a RAID, so its density is comparatively fixed.

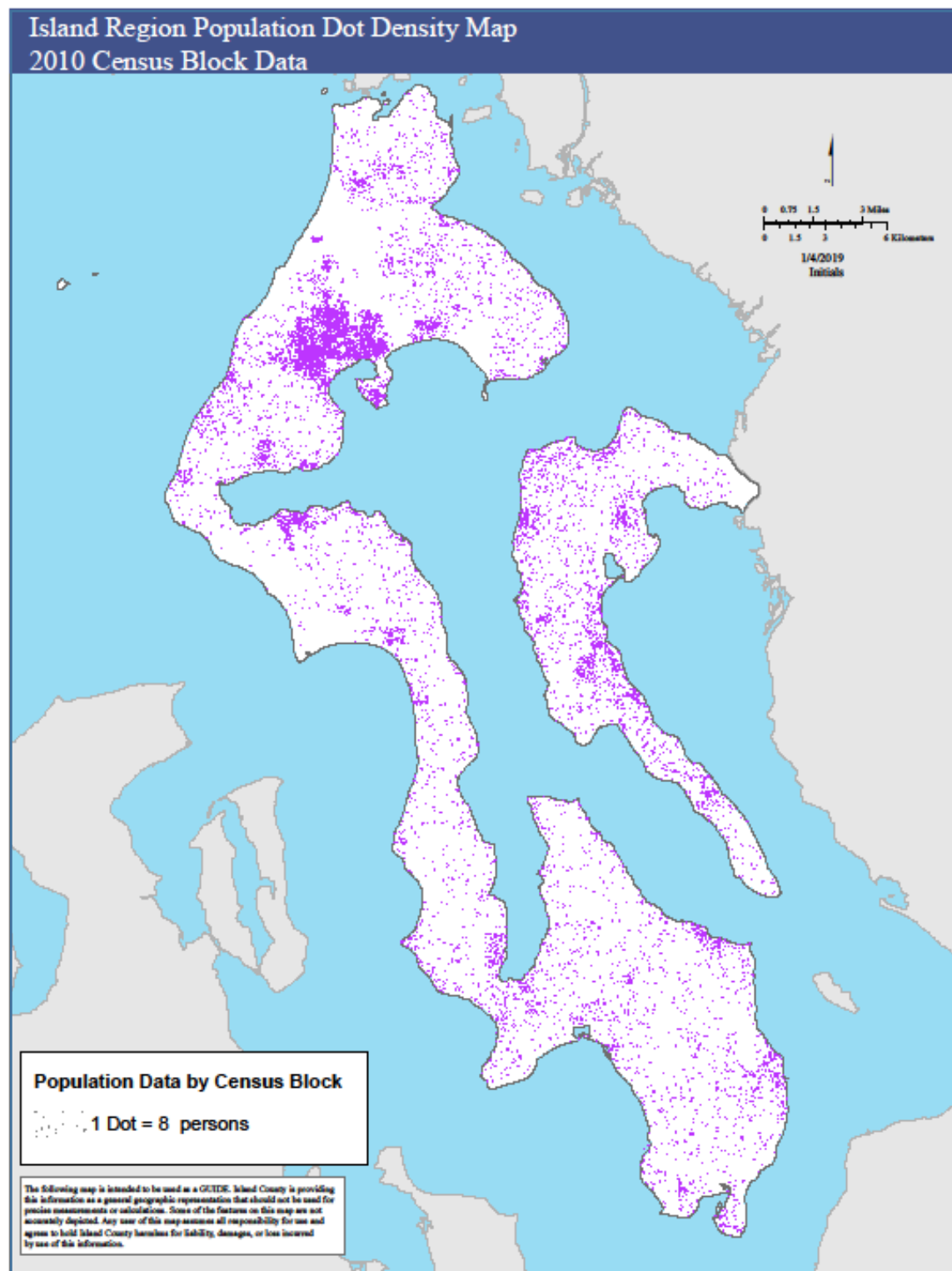


Figure 10. Dot density map of Island Region at the census block level. 1 dot equals 8 persons. Dots are distributed randomly within blocks.

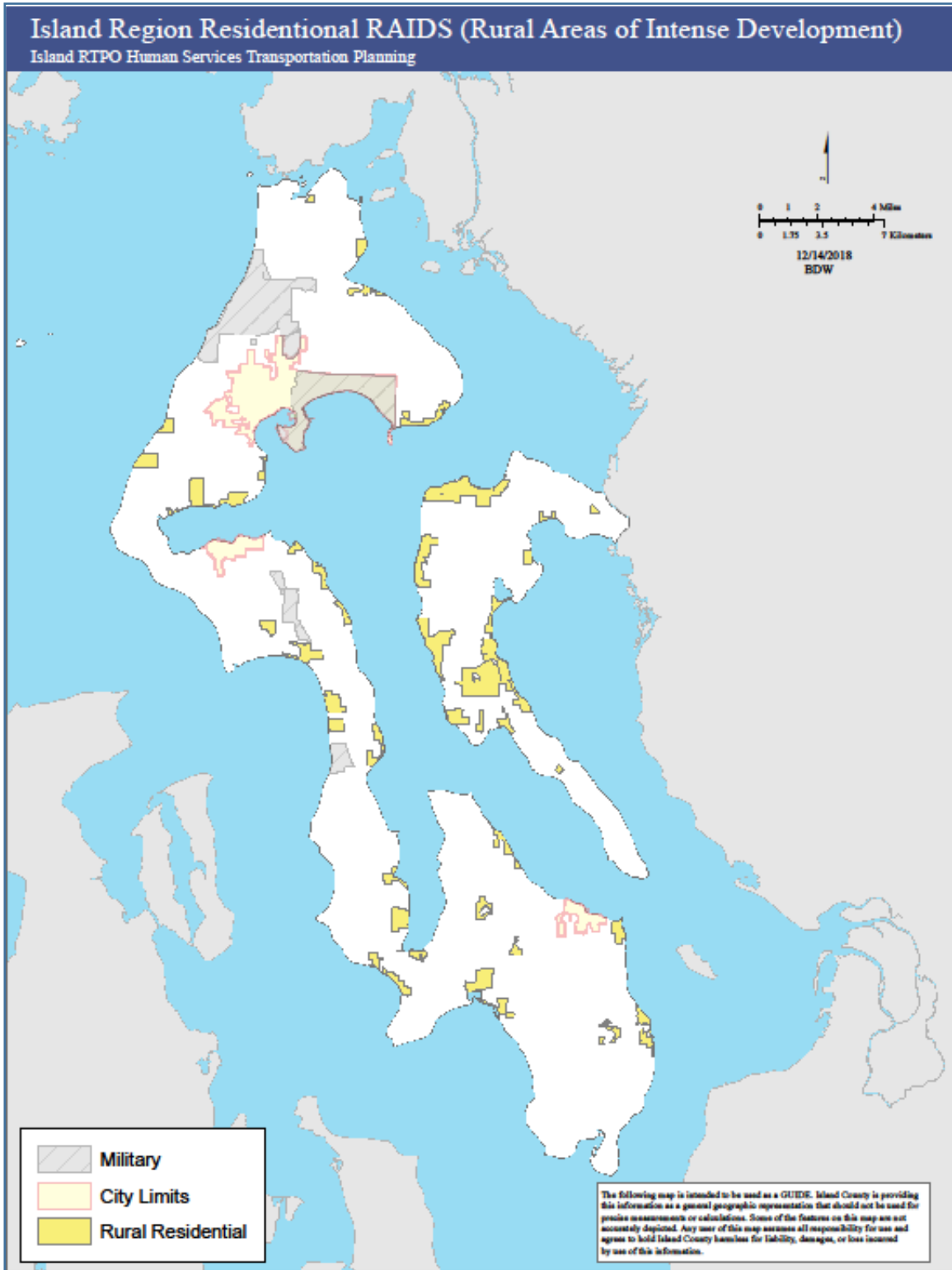


Figure 11. Map of Residential Rural Areas of Intense Development (RAIDS) in Island Region. These areas allow relatively higher density development.

Residential Rural Areas of Intense Development (RAID) with 2010 Population by Census Block

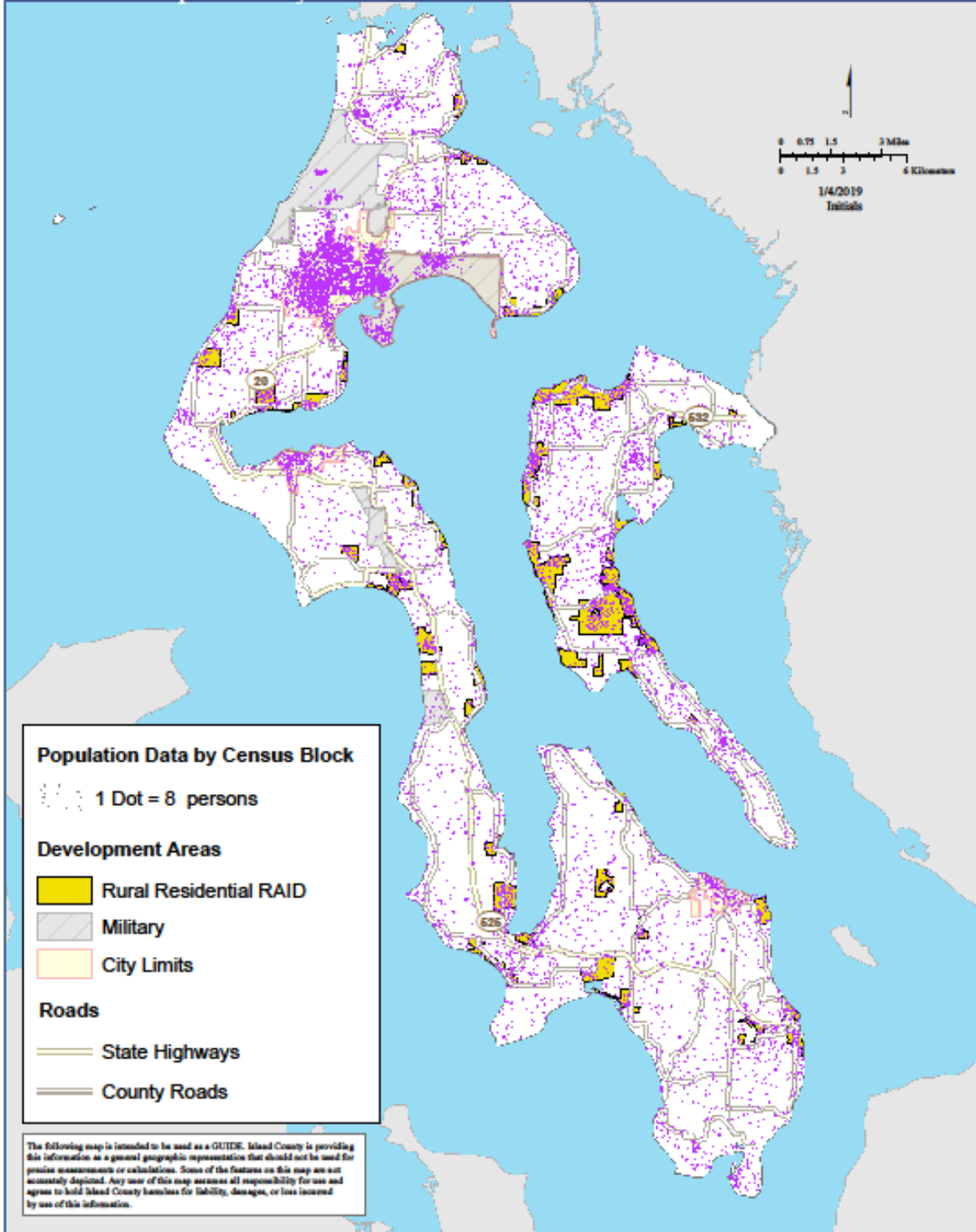


Figure 12. Overlay of population density and Rural Areas of Intense Development (RAID). A RAID allows relatively higher density development. Dot density is at the census block level with 1 dot equal to 8 persons. Dots are distributed randomly within blocks.

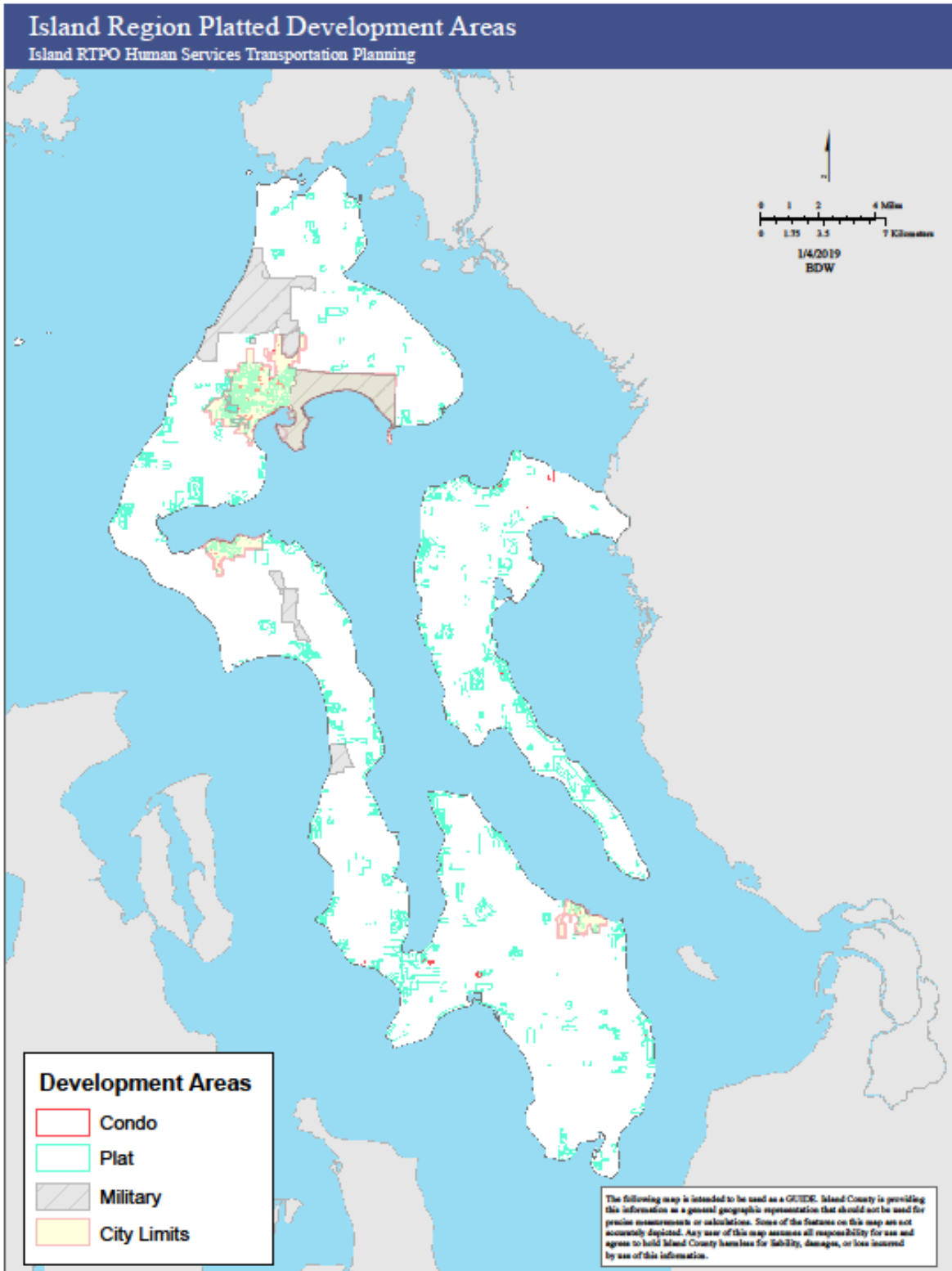


Figure 13. Platted development areas in Island Region.

Island Region Platted Development Areas with 2010 Population by Census Block

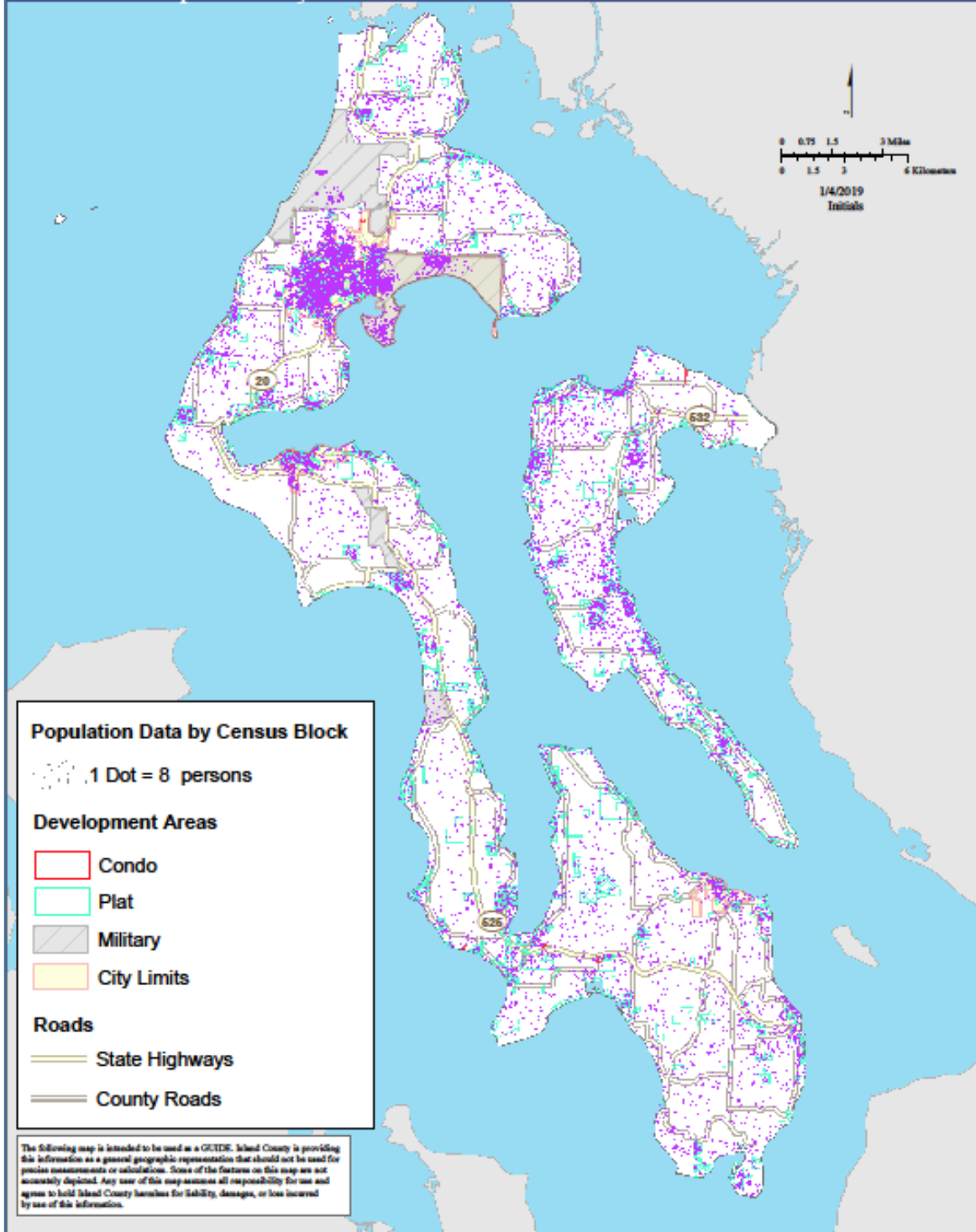


Figure 14. Population density overlay with platted development areas in Island Region. Dot density is at the census block level with 1 dot equal to 8 persons. Dots are distributed randomly within blocks.

Common Destinations

Common destinations are somewhat easier to pinpoint for rural communities than origins, given the limited number of service and employment centers available. A limited number of destinations have been mapped to show general patterns of service provision. The narrative calls out more specific information, and is divided into within-region and cross-region categories.

Within-Region Destinations

Within region destinations technically include those found on Whidbey or Camano Island. However, destinations within the City of Stanwood have also been identified here given the strong ties between Camano Island and Stanwood. Natural recreation destinations are not identified here. Island Region has many high quality sites for outdoor recreation that are well distributed such that no one site is necessarily a primary draw for residents.

One way to look at potential destinations in general is to examine non-residential RAIDs, shown in Figure 15. In addition to the municipalities, RAIDs offer relatively more services and employment opportunities than other locations in Island Region. The following list of destinations include more significant destinations and are further divided into primary and secondary sites.

Primary

City of Oak Harbor
Town of Coupeville
City of Langley
City of Stanwood

Secondary

Freeland NMUGA
Clinton RAID

Tertiary

Ken's Corner RAID
Bayview RAID

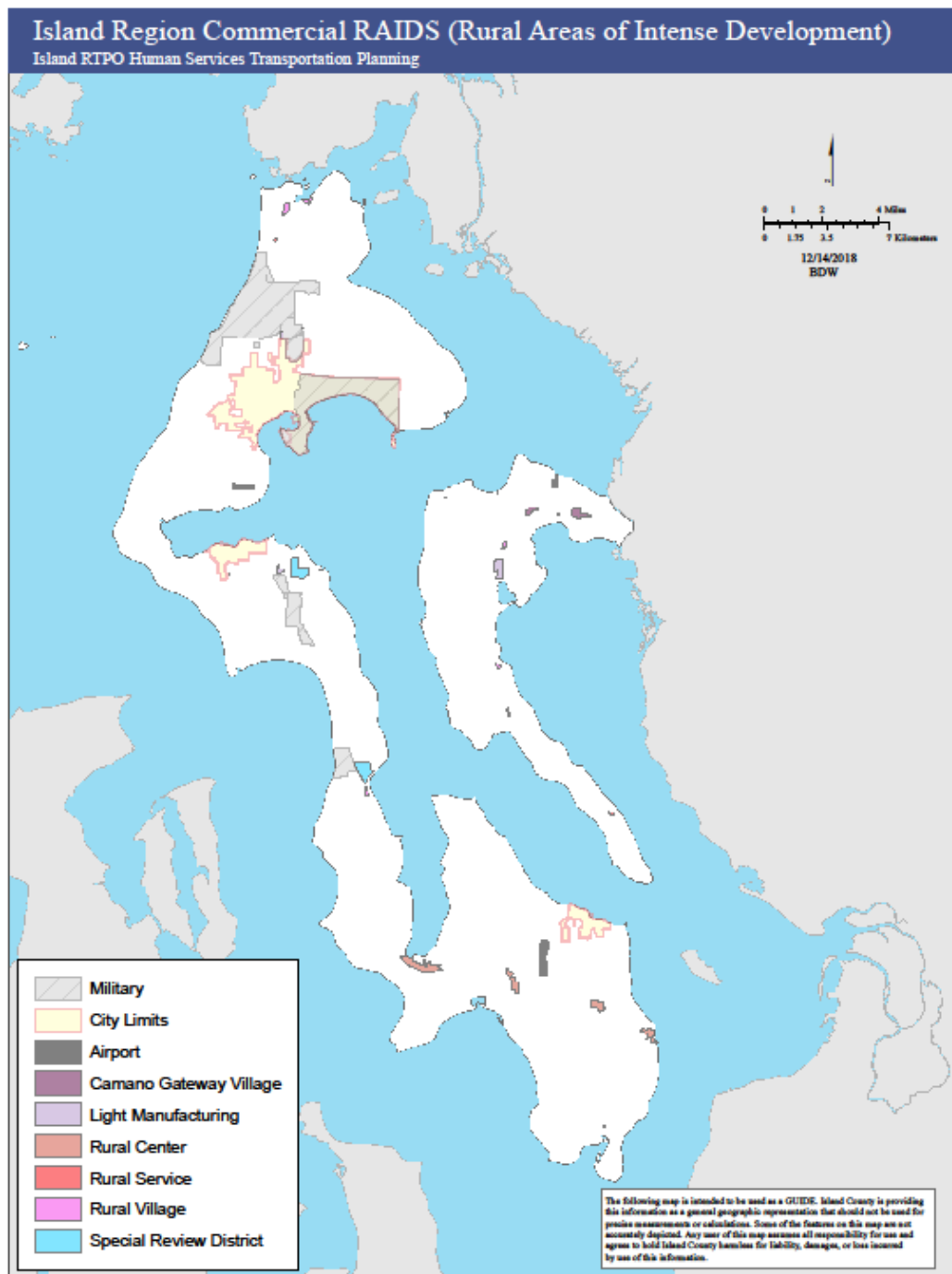


Figure 15. Map of Commercial Rural Areas of Intense Development (RAIDS) in Island Region. These commercial centers are the primary locations for services. RAIDS allow relative higher density development.

Specific Service Centers of Interest within the Region

There are a number of important destinations shown in **Table 4** that provide services specific to special needs groups, other destinations may be

relatively more attractive to low income populations, and still others are of broad interest. The planning team expects to expand this list over time with the help of the TEC, NSTA and the newly formed North Counties Transportation Coalition (NCTC), which focuses on Camano and the region adjacent to it. In some cases, destinations in Stanwood have been identified if there are few equivalent options on Camano Island.

Table 4	Destination	Type	Location
	Saars Marketplace	Discount grocery	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Grocery Outlet Bargain Market	Discount grocery	Stanwood
	Walmart	Discount retail	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Skagit Community College	Education	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Help House	Foodbank	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Good Cheer Food Bank Garden	Foodbank	Whidbey (Langley)
	Stanwood Camano Island Food Bank	Foodbank	Stanwood
	Camano Plaza Market	Grocery	Camano
	Spin Café	Shelter	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	WhidbeyHealth Hospital	Medical	Whidbey (Coupeville)
	WhidbeyHealth Medical Center	Medical	Whidbey Oak Harbor
	Puget Sound Kidney Center	Medical	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Skagit Regional Clinics	Medical	Camano
	Terry's Corner	Park and Ride/ Library	Camano
	Oak Harbor Pharmacy: Multiple options	Pharmacy	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Island Drug	Pharmacy	Whidbey (Clinton)
	Rite Aid	Pharmacy	Whidbey (Freeland)
	Marks Camano Pharmacy	Pharmacy	Camano
	Stanwood pharmacy: Multiple options	Pharmacy	Stanwood
	Ovenell Park (Stanwood-Camano Parks & Rec)	Recreation	Stanwood
	Stanwood-Camano Resource Center	Recreation	Stanwood
	Castle Park (South Whidbey Parks & Rec)	Recreation	Whidbey (Clinton/Langley)
	Oak Harbor Pool (North Whidbey Parks & Rec)	Recreation	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Stanwood-Camano YMCA	Recreation/Teen Services	Stanwood
	Bayview Senior Center	Senior Services	Whidbey (Bayview)
	Oak Harbor Senior Center	Senior Services	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Camano Center	Senior Services	Camano
	Stanwood Community & Senior Center	Senior Services	Stanwood
	Island County Public Health and Human Services	Social Services	Whidbey (Coupeville)
	Opportunity Council	Social Services	Whidbey
	Island Thrift	Thrift	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	WAIF	Thrift	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Garage of Blessings	Thrift	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)
	Habitat for Humanity	Thrift	Whidbey (Oak Harbor)

More health service locations and also WIC resources have been mapped in Figure 16. Figure 17 indicates within-region schools, while also depicting some post-secondary options both within and just outside the region. Figure 18 provides within-region Park and Ride locations, which have been noted to be a key asset in Island Region for those hoping to limit their driving distance and/or expenses.

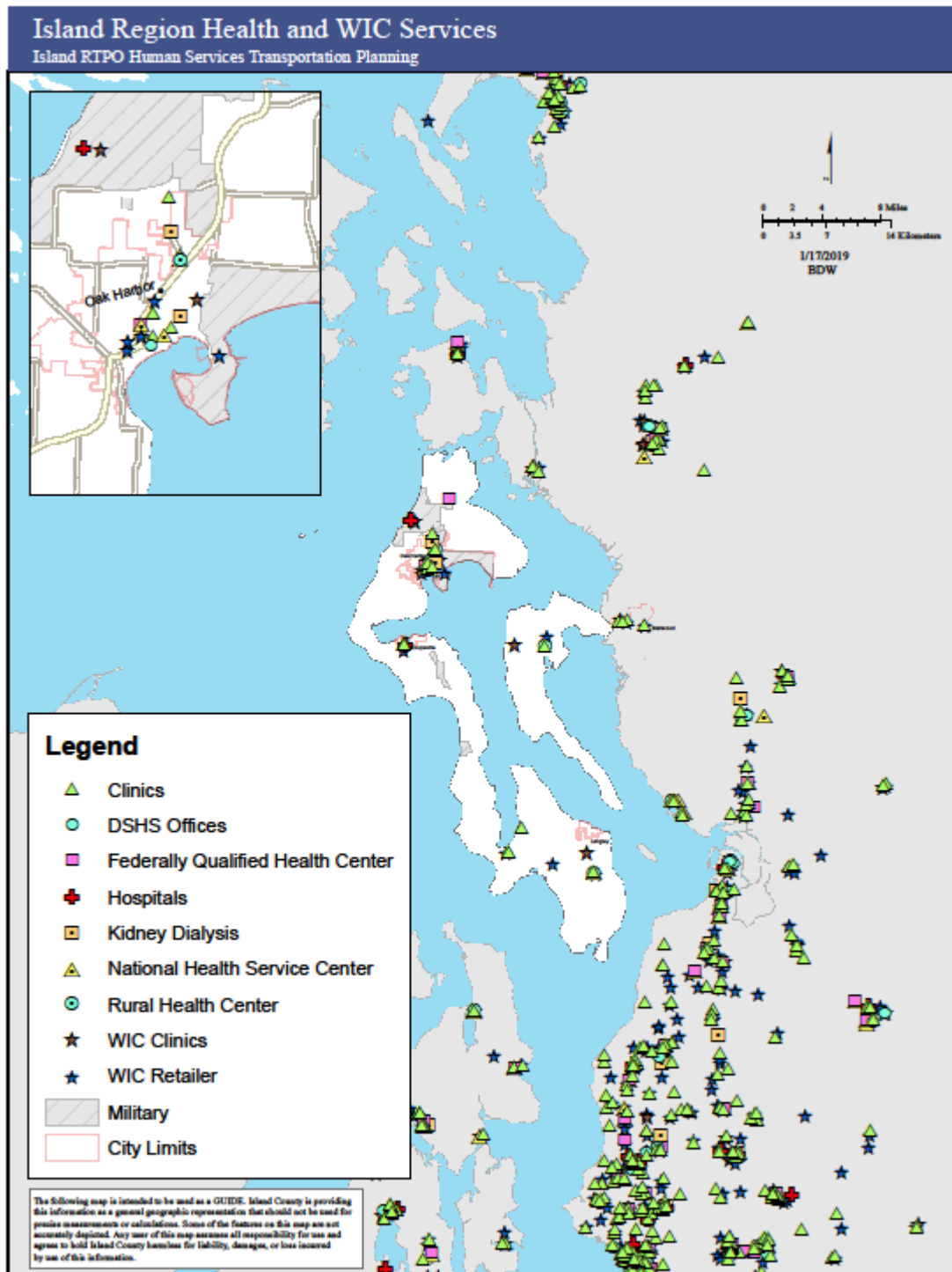


Figure 16. Health services and WIC resources in Island Region. A broader view of the surrounding areas helps to illustrate the relatively low density of services compared with the nearby City of Everett.

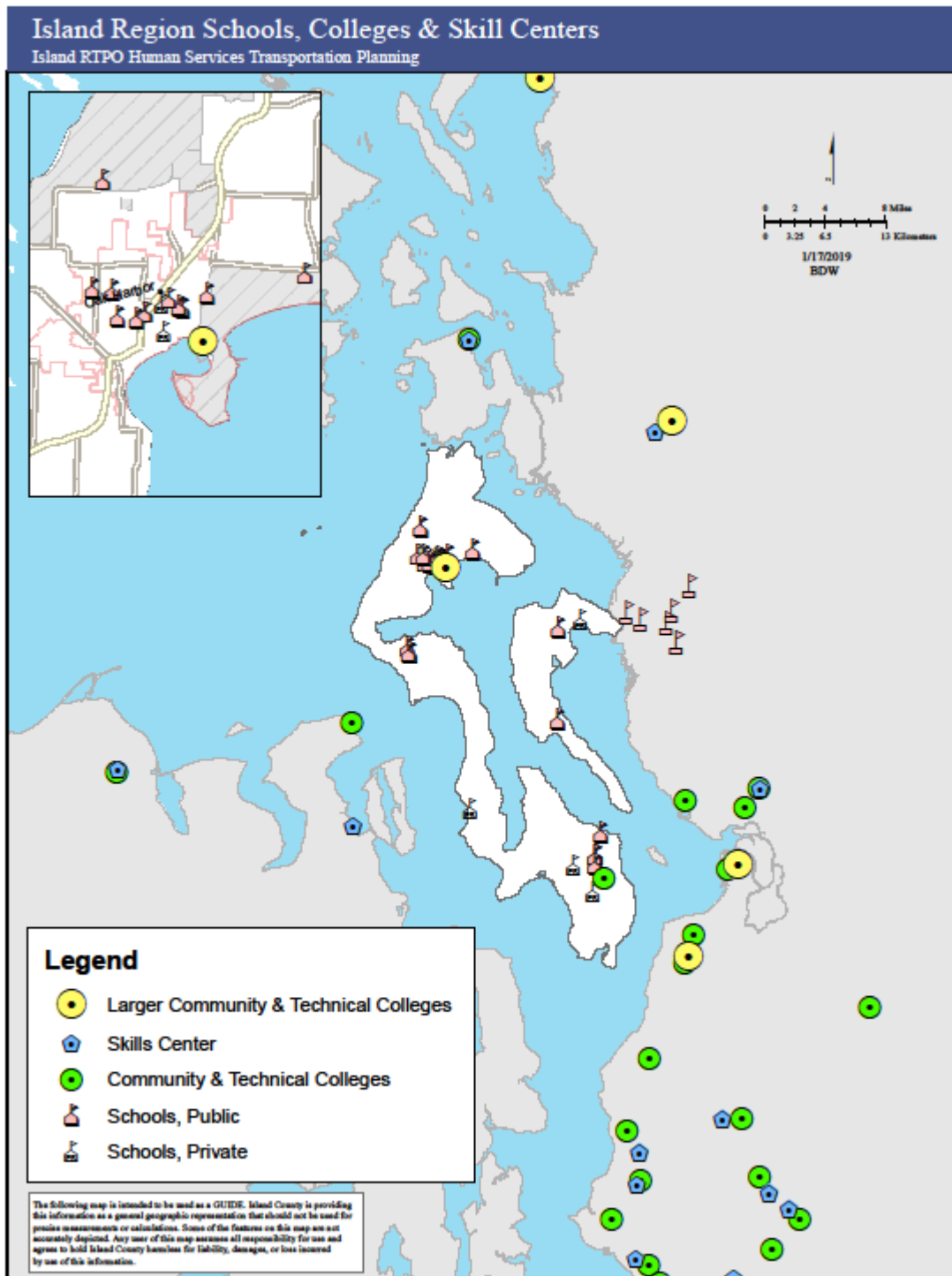


Figure 17. Within region schools as well as community and technical colleges in surrounding areas. Larger community colleges and technical schools are shown in yellow. Not shown are University of Washington campuses (south) and Western Washington University (north), which are likely destinations for some transportation disadvantaged populations.

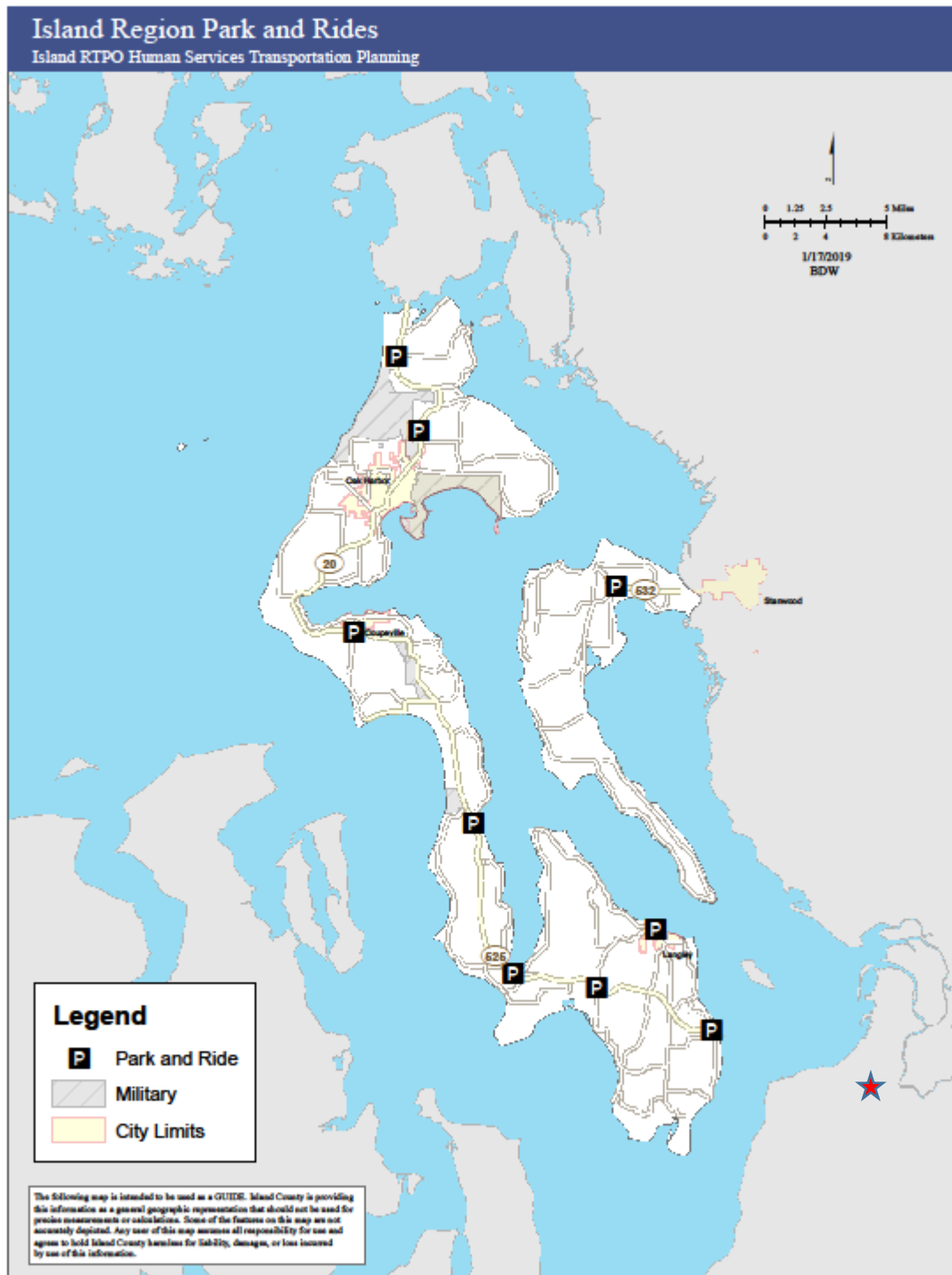


Figure 18. Within region Park and Ride locations. Many park and ride options also exist outside of the region, though anecdotally, these can be challenging to utilize due to high demand. A red star has been placed in Mukilteo. Intermodal connections in Mukilteo present parking challenges, particularly for those headed to Whidbey Island. Options are being explored for that location.

Paratransit Destination Data

One indicator of specific destinations of interest are paratransit trips. Paratransit service is only available to eligible individuals and is not income limited so the destinations are not necessarily aligned to those of other special needs populations. Island Transit generated a report for destination data covering the period July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. Four Island Transit destination categories were identified: Shopping Locations, Senior Centers, Medical Facilities, and Other Destinations. The destination data covered 41.7% of 62,987 paratransit trips. Some Stanwood destinations are also shown. Island Transit Route 3 serves the City of Stanwood, which allows Camano paratransit riders to access services there. The data has been summarized in Figures 19 through 23, below. The first chart compares the total number of destinations by category, and the others show trips to specific destinations.

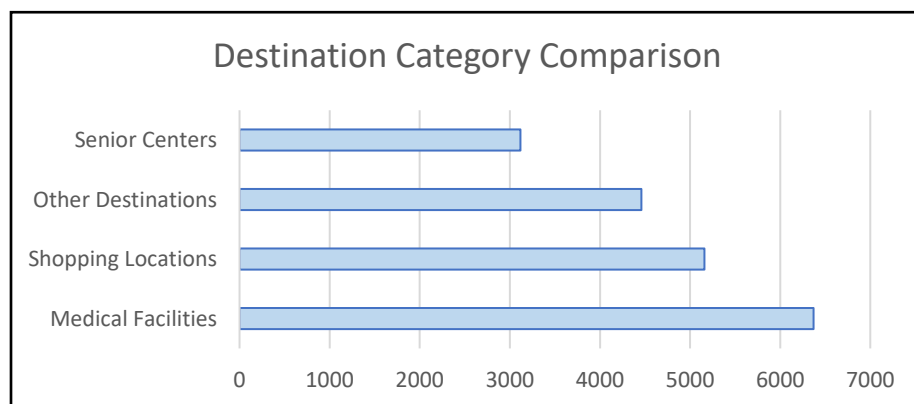


Figure 19. Categories of Paratransit trips to locations in Island Region (including City of Stanwood), between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

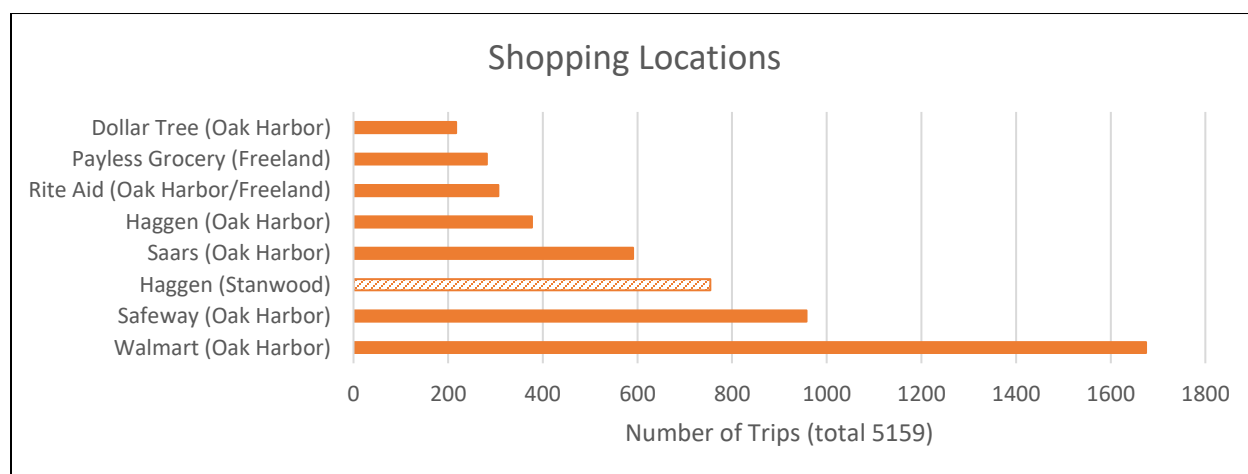


Figure 20. Paratransit trips to shopping locations in Island Region, between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. Stanwood is outside of Island Region and has been indicated by hash marks.

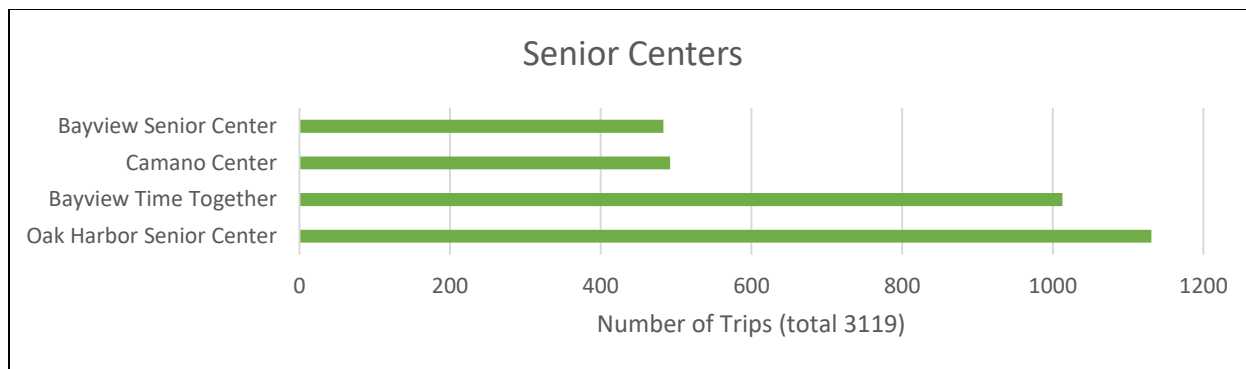


Figure 21. Paratransit trips to senior centers in Island Region, between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

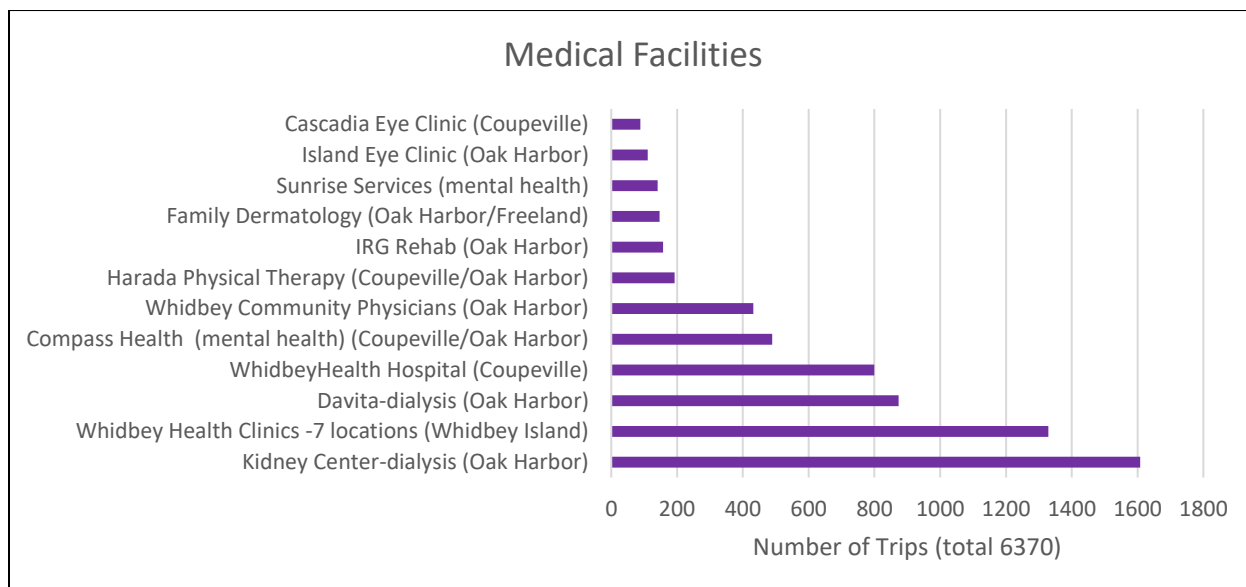


Figure 22. Paratransit trips to medical facilities in Island Region, between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

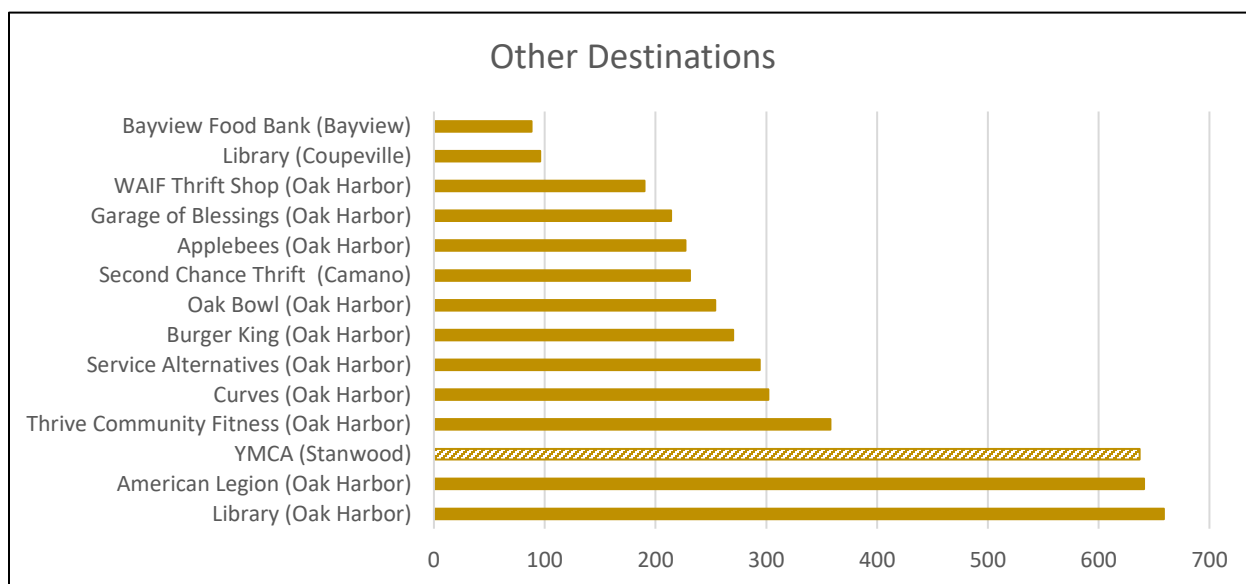


Figure 23. Paratransit trips to other destinations in Island Region, between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

Looking at the data for Medical Facilities in Figure 22, the two dialysis clinics in Oak Harbor together account for 2,482 trips or 39% of all medical trip destinations. The challenge for dialysis patients is significant (see box below).

Box 2: Paratransit for Dialysis Patients

More Island Transit paratransit trips are made to dialysis clinics than other medical destinations (see Figure 22). These trips can consume a great deal of time for some clients.

There are two dialysis clinics in Oak Harbor, and none on Camano Island or in the City of Stanwood. A paratransit trip from south Whidbey to Oak Harbor can take an hour and half each way and clients receive treatment for four hours. For Camano residents Island Transit's paratransit service connects with Community Transit's Dart service in Stanwood. Dart then typically takes clients to the City of Everett. The final trip to a dialysis clinic may require 3 buses.

Cross-Region Destinations

Island Region offers a limited number of services and fewer employment and educational opportunities versus surrounding regions. Even some recreational opportunities such as sporting competitions may require travel outside of the region. Figure 24 depicts some destinations of interest outside of Island Region, but many more could have been included. The primary destination centers include: Bellingham, Burlington/Mount Vernon, Sedro Wooley, Everett, and Seattle.

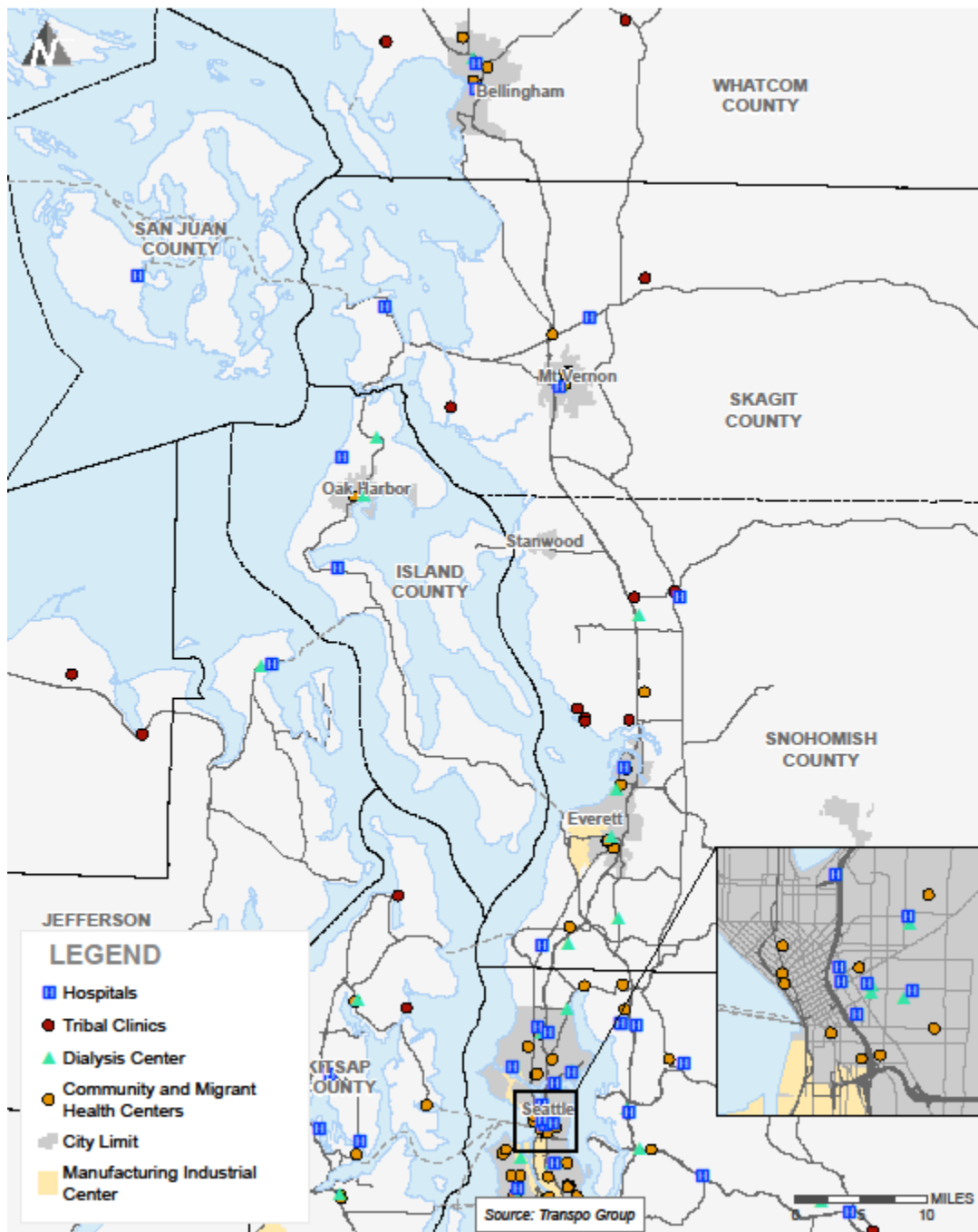


Figure 24. Map of some common destinations outside of Island Region. This map emphasizes the fact that most of the available services are located outside of the region and are concentrated in locations such as Bellingham, Burlington/Mt. Vernon/Sedro Wooley, Everett, and Seattle.

Existing Transportation Services

This section highlights the range of travel options, services, and modes of travel that are available within the Island Region, with a particular focus on those that serve the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes, youth, and other segments of the population with special transportation needs.

Within Region Public Transit – Island Transit

Island Transit operates fixed-route (local and commuter), and paratransit service throughout Whidbey and Camano Island. They also have County Connectors that allow cross-regional travel. In addition, Island Transit offers vanpool and RideLink programs.

Island Transit implemented a number of changes in 2017/18 to improve routing, make more connections with ferries and expand services. Saturday service was a key addition for the agency. Island Transit also updated their website, added the cell phone Route Shout that allows clients to track buses, and added a mobility management staff position to better advertise services and train users.

Box 3: Types of Transportation Services within or starting in Island Region

Fixed route (publicly provided): Fixed route service has a designated route and stops that don't change, with a set timetable for each day.

Demand-response: Flexible routes and schedules that depend on the pick-up and drop-off locations and timing needs of passengers. Paratransit is form of demand-response service, with restrictions.

Vanpool: Vanpool programs allow small groups of people to share a ride to a common destination. Users benefits from cost savings, time savings (with HOV lanes), preferential ferry boarding, and not having to drive every day.

Transit-Facilitated Community Programs: Some transit agencies work with community organizations to support their transportation needs.

Community Operated Services: Services such as community van programs, operated by community centers, or other organizations. These programs may be funded by Medicare, Medicaid or utilize grant funds.

Private transportation services: Taxis, shuttles, transportation network companies, and rideshare networks are services typically based on trips to specific locations, such as airports or places of work. These services generally charge per trip and require immediate payment.

Volunteer Drivers: Volunteers drivers may work directly with organizations or have informal arrangements with neighbors.

Ferries: Ferries are a form of inter-regional travel that originate within Island Region. Ferries generally facilitate travel by other modes (walk, bike, car, transit).

Island Transit has operated as a fare free system for over 29 years⁴. Fare free systems are not the norm, but they have been shown to increase transit ridership by reducing the barrier of use, especially for those with limited income. In addition, national research and industry experience has shown that charging fares for small or rural transit systems produces limited operating revenue because the costs to collect and administer a fare program are significant compared to the revenue generated. Therefore, charging a fare reduces ridership while creating little additional revenue for operating the system. The fare free system was most recently evaluated during 2017/18 and it remains the preferred system for Island Transit.

Fixed-Route, Route Deviation and Express Service

Island Transit currently operates 15 routes serving Island Region population centers, and ferry terminals. Set stops are identified, however Island Transit will perform “flag stops” along routes, provided it is safe to do so. See overview of routes in Figures 25 and 26.

⁴ Route 412 from Camano to Everett was a temporary exception, but converted to fare free in 2018

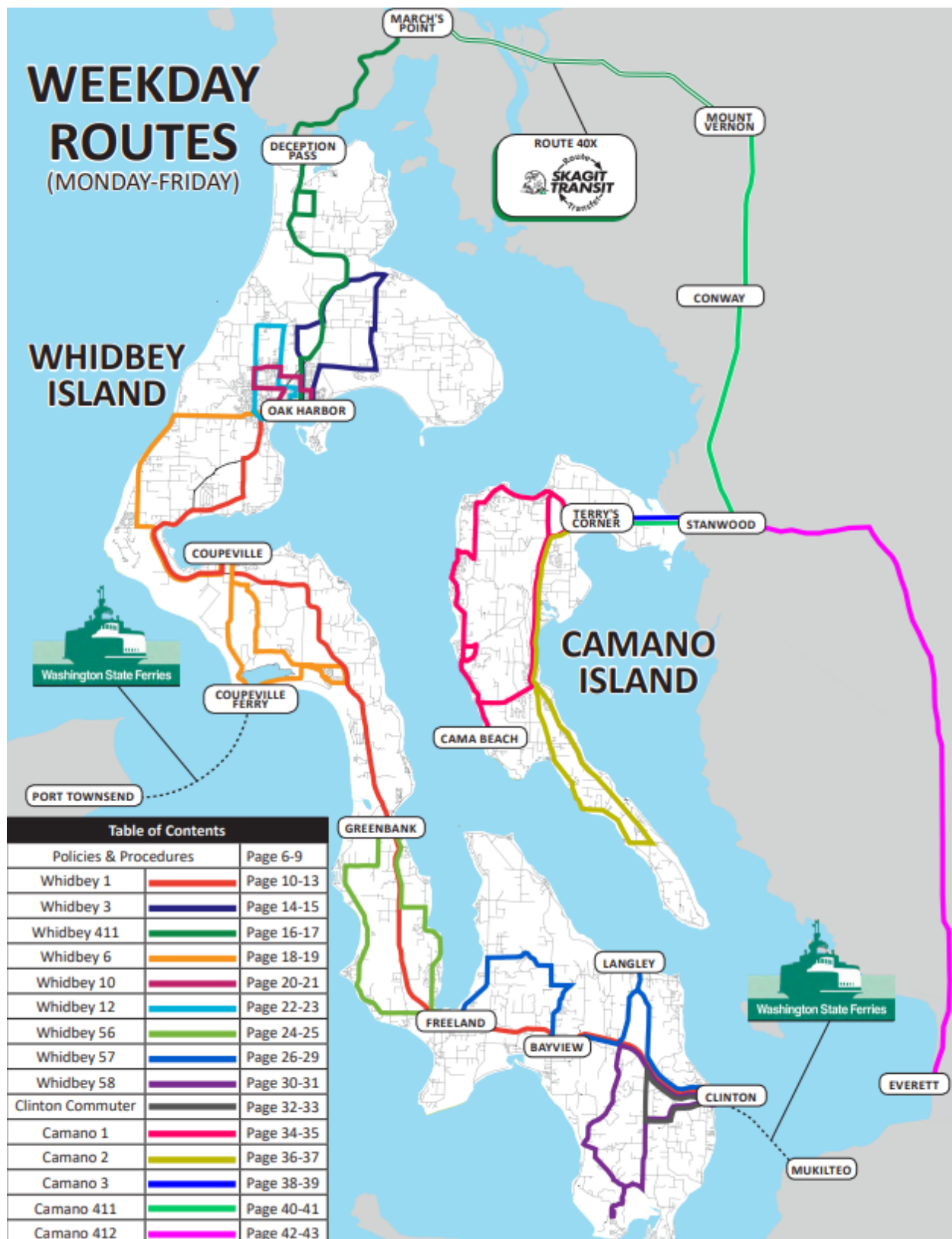


Figure 25. Island Transit weekday routes. Note Skagit Transit provides connector service between March's Point and Mount Vernon Station. Off Island Trips may utilize other transit providers to reach similar destinations such as Everett.

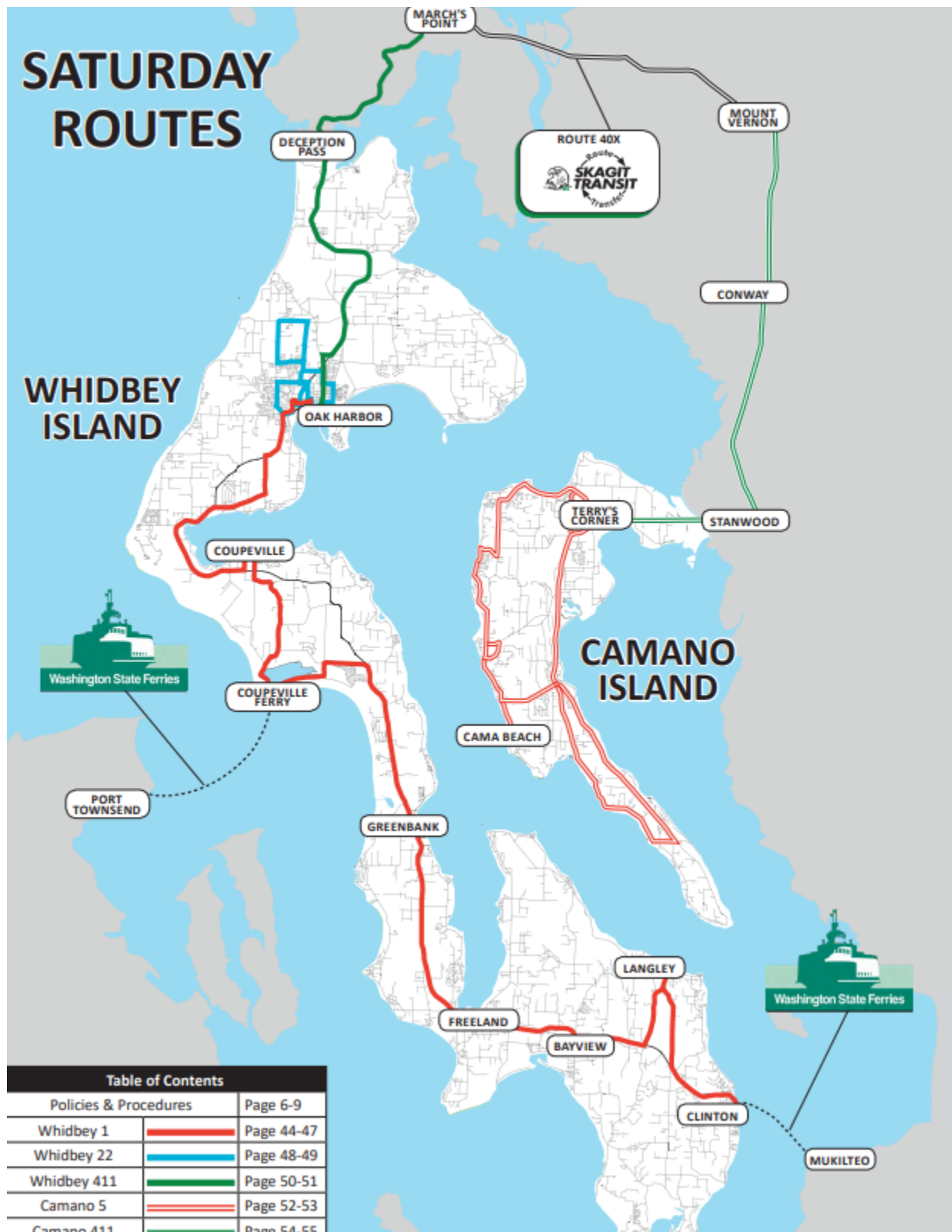


Figure 26. Island Transit Saturday routes. Note Skagit Transit provides connector service between March's Point and Mount Vernon Station.

Service operates between approximately 5 am and 8 pm on weekdays, with some routes available on Saturdays. Express commuter service is also provided to the Clinton Ferry. All buses are fully ADA accessible. Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018, Island Transit recorded 809,209 boardings, operated 62,691 annual service hours and logged 1,420,406 annual vehicle miles.

Paratransit Service

Island Transit provides door-to-door paratransit service for ADA eligible persons with a disability who are unable to use the regular fixed-route bus service, due to their disability. Paratransit service is based upon the same days, hours, and route structure, as the regular fixed-route service and extends $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on either side of the fixed-route service.

Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018, Island Transit paratransit services provided 62,987 trips, operated 26,238 annual service hours, and logged 373,171 annual vehicle service miles.

Box 4: Transit Agency Services Tied to Taxing Districts: Paratransit Challenges

In general, paratransit service is provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of fixed route service, but does not cross county lines. This is because a transit agency must use the taxing revenue generated within its Public Transit Benefit Area (PTBA) to fund services within that jurisdiction.

In some cases funding sources allow transit service providers, such as Island Transit, to cross jurisdictional boundaries to connect riders with other transit providers. Most Island Transit routes that travel outside of the PTBA (off island, County Connector Service) are designated commuter routes for which paratransit service is not provided. An exception is *Route 3 Camano-Stanwood* which is a regular fixed route that extends paratransit service to downtown Stanwood.

Boundary restrictions make cross-county paratransit trips challenging. For example, a rider from Oak Harbor would need to make 4 transfers to reach Island Hospital in Anacortes:

*Island Paratransit → Island Transit Fixed Route →
Skagit Transit Fixed Route → Skagit Paratransit*

Other Within-Region Programs through Island Transit

Vanpool Program

Island Transit provides additional service through their vanpool program. The fees collected cover operating costs including fuel, maintenance, insurance and the capital cost of the vans. Vanpools are eligible for discounts on Washington State Ferry services as well as preferential loading. Vanpool vehicles are not ADA accessible. In 2017, 182,128 Vanpool passenger trips were recorded.

RideLink Program

RideLink is a transit-facilitated service offered by Island Transit. The RideLink program started in 2018 and provides vans for operation by Island County service organizations to assist special needs populations and other groups.

Bike Lockers

Island Transit installed bike lockers in 2018. In addition to bike racks on buses, this subscription service addresses first/last mile concerns for some

transit riders by providing a low cost option to securely lock up a bike and protect it from the weather.

Within Region Human Service Agencies and Non-profit programs

Within-region human service agencies included here are those located on Whidbey and Camano islands and a selection that are based in Stanwood, but also serve transportation needs of Camano residents.

[Ryan's House for Youth](#)

Ryan's House For Youth is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that serves all youth ages 12-24. They offer a drop-in center for day shelter services. Older youth (18-24), can access emergency, short-term and transitional housing options on campus and apply for housing through the Host Family Program. The organization provides 24 hour, 7 day per week, transportation services to doctor and counseling appointments, school, and employment.

[Island Senior Resources](#)

Island Senior Resources is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that provides essential resources throughout Island County for seniors and adults with disabilities, including for their families, and caregivers. Services are provided on-site and in homes. The organization operates three senior centers and a housing facility:

- Oak Harbor Senior Center
- Island Senior Resources (at Bayview)
- Camano Center
- CamBey Apartments (Coupeville)

Island Senior Resources offers transportation to medical appointments as well as to grocery stores and pharmacies. Meals on wheels and a chore program are also provided. The transportation service area extends from Bellingham to Seattle and is partially funded by government programs and donations. Transportation services depend on volunteer drivers.

[Stanwood Camano Community Resource Center](#)

The Stanwood Camano Community Resource Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that offering educational and engaging programs for youths, adults and families as well as emergency/financial support services. The center provides a number of transportation services to Stanwood-Camano residents including, transportation for teens to and from summer field trips, and disabled adults (AKtion Club) to and from special

events/trips. In addition, for those who cannot afford transportation the center provides:

- Bus tickets (typically Community Transit and Skagit Transit)
- Gas vouchers (provided by the Salvation Army)

The center also offers a mobile dental clinic that provides free dental care to low-income adults.

Stanwood Community and Senior Center

The Stanwood Community and Senior Center provides Medicaid transportation through Hopelink, which does not directly serve Camano Island, though patients can be brought home to Camano from areas that are served by Hopelink. The Stanwood Community and Senior Center also offers private-pay transportation services, which may be used to reach medical appointments, the YMCA, Airporter shuttle locations, and other destinations.

State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

DSHS sometimes provides assistance with acquiring bus passes or gas vouchers for individuals on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

St. Vincent de Paul, Everett, WA

St. Vincent DePaul, is a charitable organization based in Everett that offers a variety of resources to those in need. Stanwood-Camano volunteers (Vincentians) provide gas cards to families and individuals in the area.

Disabled American Veterans

The Disabled American Veterans group provides transportation services to the Veterans Administration hospital in Seattle five days a week. Service is provided from Oak Harbor, Mount Vernon, and points south and is operated by volunteers.

Whidbey Veterans Resource Center, Langley

The Whidbey Veterans Resource Center in Langley offers free, once-per-week, van service to the Seattle Veterans Administration Hospital. This south Whidbey service depends on volunteers. The van is part of Island Transit's Ride Link program.



<https://www.whidbeynewstimes.com/crosswind/new-van-for-veterans-helps-with-health-care/>

Box 5: Veterans Benefits

The largest employer in Island Region is Naval Air Station Whidbey. The Whidbey Island Naval base offers commissary shopping, hospital services and other benefits. Many people may believe that these benefits are available to all veterans as defined in Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations. However, most of the benefits offered on base are only available to active duty or retired military personnel.

Understanding veteran benefits can be challenging, but the biggest distinction is between retired veterans and those who have been discharged before retirement. With regard to health benefits, the following apply:

Benefit for Service Related Disabilities: Veterans with service-related disability do not need to retire from military service to receive monthly payments related to the severity of their disability.

Access to Medical Services: If determined eligible veterans can receive medical services from a Veterans Affairs Hospital. The closest facility for Island Region residents is in Seattle. Retired veterans may use a base hospital when space is available or in the event of an emergency. Generally, dental service is not provided for any veterans.

Benefits for Retired Veterans: Veterans who retire from military service after 20 or more years receive retirement pay, disability benefits, and VA health care.

<https://www.military.com/>

Within Region School Districts & McKinney Vento

Island Region is served by four school districts:

- Oak Harbor Public Schools
- Coupeville School District
- South Whidbey School District
- Stanwood-Camano School District

Bus transportation to and from school is provided to students living outside of a one-mile radius around their home school. Individual school districts may also have other transportation programs in place. For instance Oak Harbor Public Schools partners with the City of Oak Harbor's Safe Routes to School program to support families with resources such as a Walking School Bus, Bike Trains and other safe route resources.

The designated stop for a student may not be their home. The Stanwood-Camano school district transports students to daycares if they are on

established bus routes. In addition, Stanwood-Camano school district transports middle school students to the Stanwood-Camano YMCA afterschool. The district will also transport students from Port Susan Middle School to Stanwood Middle School enabling them to access the Stanwood-Camano Community Resource Center.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (2001) requires school districts to provide transportation to homeless students wishing to remain in their school of choice. A variety of transportation modes may be used to meet the student's needs.

Resource

- McKinney-Vento Resource
<https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/665.1.pdf>

Washington's Learning by Choice law (1990) allows parents some ability to select which public schools their students attend. Transportation for transfer student outside of existing district routes must be arranged by a student's parent/guardian. The law also allows 11th and 12th grade students to enroll, tuition free, in a Running Start Program. Running Start includes community/technical college programs, tribal colleges and some public universities. Transportation to higher education institutions is not the responsibility of the school district.

Some Island Region students from South Whidbey School District attend the Sno-Isle TECH skill center in Everett. Skill centers are regional secondary schools that serve high school students from multiple school districts. Skill centers develop academic and work skills that allow students to enter the job market or advanced education/training. Bus transportation is provided by participating school districts at no cost to the students.

Resource

- Learning by Choice law:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/GeneralInfo/pubdocs/LearningByChoice2014.pdf>

Within Region Private Transportation Services

Coupeville Cab Company

Based in Coupeville, WA, the Coupeville Cab Company primarily offers services for central Whidbey Island and will make pick-ups as far as Oak Harbor. Drop-offs are island wide, with advanced reservations and sometimes go as far as Anacortes.

All Island Express Taxi

The All Island Express Taxi is based in Clinton, WA but offers service for all of Whidbey Island.

Ault Field Taxi, LLC

Ault Field Taxi is based in Oak Harbor and provides services from Race Road, near Coupeville, WA to the north terminus of Whidbey Island at Deception Pass.

Whidbey Taxi Service

The Whidbey Taxi Service is based in Oak Harbor, WA and commonly serves communities between Coupeville, WA and Anacortes, WA. This company will make longer trips as well with advanced notice.

J&B Transportation

J&B Transportation is located in Stanwood, WA and specializes in providing transportation for special needs individuals. The service area most commonly ranges between Bellingham and Seattle, but other trips are possible. J&B Transportation offers “Door through Door” wheelchair and ambulatory transport. While most trips are associated with medical appointments, clients are also transported to family events, shopping centers and other locations for a variety of trip purposes. JB Transportation is contracts with Northwest Regional Council for Medicaid transportation.

Transportation Network Companies

Private taxi-like ride hailing services are often referred to as Transportation Network Companies (TNCs). Uber and Lyft are two well-known TNCs. Such services are generally associated with denser urban areas, and may not be feasible options, versus local taxi companies, for most rural communities at this time.

Both Uber and Lyft indicate broad service areas associated with particular cities. Uber and Lyft services for Island Region are associated with the City of Bellingham (see Figure 27).

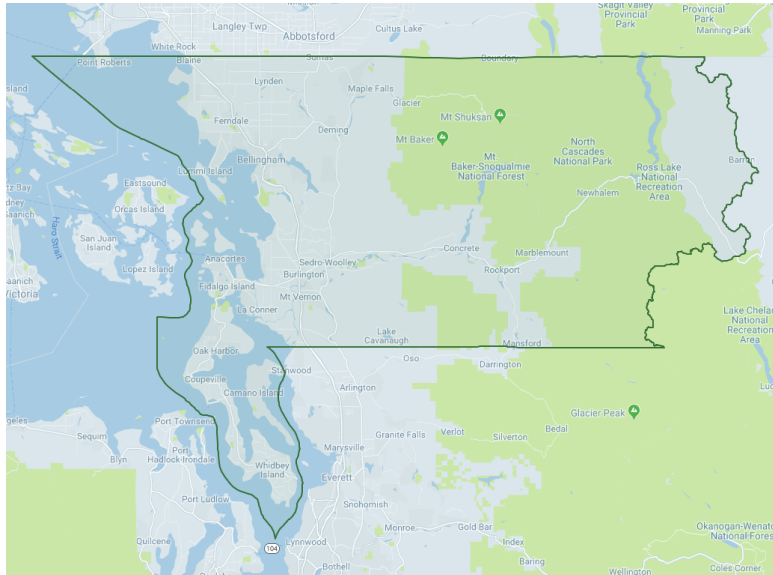


Figure 27. Uber service area associated with the City of Bellingham. Island Region is included, but drivers may not be available to accept ride requests and the trips will likely be costly if drivers do accept.

Although Whidbey and Camano Islands appear to be served by Uber, a service request will not necessarily be filled and the cost may be high. Regarding a ride request, the company website indicates that *“a nearby driver sees and chooses to accept the rider’s trip request.”* Lower density areas are less likely to have nearby drivers or ones willing to make extended trips.

Box 6: Future Within-Region Services?

Other transit agency service models have been discussed, that may be worth exploring in the future. One such model is On-Demand Transit. Unlike paratransit that only serves individuals with a qualifying disability, on-demand transit usually serves a broader rider base.

Existing on-demand transit programs vary in the specific services offered. Generally, they are pre-arranged curb-to-curb pick-up and drop-off services and/or services connecting to fixed route transit. In some versions, rides are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to ADA-eligible individuals.

Public Transit, Commuter Rail and Ferries (cross-regional)

Many affordable, cross-regional trips are possible using a combination of transit service providers. A traveler has the potential to reach a significant portion of Western Washington, though trips may involve multiple transfers and long travel times. Trips requiring paratransit services may require many transfers and depending on the purpose, may not be feasible at all for a single day trip (see Box 4 regarding Paratransit challenges).

Island Transit County Connectors

Island Transit operates three County Connector fixed routes that provide cross-regional connections with Skagit, Snohomish Counties. Most

destinations within Skagit County require a transfer to Skagit Transit. Within Snohomish County, Island Transit connects directly (Figures 25/26) to the cities of Stanwood and Everett.

Skagit Transit

Skagit Transit operates transit service within Skagit County. Residents of Island Region primarily benefit from Skagit's fixed route (local and express county connector, Figures 25/26), and paratransit services although other services are offered.

Whatcom Transportation Authority

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) operates fixed-route, paratransit and other services in Whatcom County. County connector service through Skagit Transit from Mount Vernon connects to the city of Bellingham.

Community Transit

Community Transit operates fixed-route and paratransit services within Snohomish County in addition to other services in and between Snohomish and King Counties. Skagit Transit and Island Transit provide connecting service to local and express Community Transit commuter service at Stanwood Station.

Everett Transit

Everett Transit operates fixed-route and paratransit services within Snohomish County in addition to other services in and between Snohomish and King Counties. Skagit Transit and Island Transit provide connecting service to local and express Everett Transit commuter service at Stanwood Station. Box 7 discusses one particular Everett Transit Route of interest.

Box 7: Trip planning can be complicated: Everett Transit Route 18

Transit riders increasingly rely on internet-based trip information to help them make interagency transit connections. Many Whidbey Island residents may seek work, or require services in downtown Everett, which is relatively close to Clinton, WA. Unfortunately, a general internet search for travel between these locations fails to show Everett Transit as an option.

Everett Transit Bus 18 offers a direct, 25 minute route from the ferry terminal to downtown. The Community Transit option that a Google search brings up, requires a circuitous trip of about an hour and a half and a bus transfer.

Sound Transit

Sound Transit operates express bus service and commuter rail service between Everett Station and King Street Station in Seattle. Both the bus and

rail options connect with Island Transit from Camano Island, though rail is limited to a single morning connection.

The Southbound commuter rail is also available for limited morning connections in Mukilteo. Such connections can be facilitated with Island Transit and Clinton-Mukilteo ferry scheduling. Northbound commuter rail is only offered for the evening commute.

[Washington State Ferry Service](#)

Ferries can be considered both a marine highway and a transit connector service. Washington State Ferries operates two daily service routes originating in Island Region. Whidbey Island connects to transit in Snohomish County via the Mukilteo/Clinton route and to Jefferson County via the Coupeville/Port Townsend route. Transit access to other ferry routes requires additional transfers.

[Tribal Transportation Providers](#)

Island Region is associated with four tribal nations, however no tribal reservations are located within the region itself. Tribal transportation options are important to consider both for tribal members and others who reside in Island Region and travel to, or through, tribal lands. The following lists the four tribes and the transportation services managed by them:

- **Samish Indian Nation**
 - The Samish Tribe owns a small inventory of vehicles serving tribal needs. The 2018 Samish Transportation Plan identified the need to work with Skagit Transit to expand or improve transit operations to meet the needs of the Nation's members. In particular, the plan identifies the need to support expansion of special needs transportation services currently provided by the Samish Indian Nation. The Nation has also shown interest in working with Island Transit to support tribal member trips to the future tribal center near Campbell Lake, Anacortes.
- **Swinomish**
 - Skagit Transit serves the Swinomish Reservation. Trips to the reservation from Island Region utilize Island Transit County Connectors in combination with Skagit Transit routes. Within the reservation, the Swinomish Village is served by Skagit Transit Dial-A-Ride weekdays from 8 am to 5 pm.

- Stillaguamish
 - The Stillaguamish Department of Transportation provides transportation services, which includes demand responsive service as well as vanpool services. This service is offered by the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians to native and non-native individuals who need to travel to native businesses and facilities or other facilities in the northern Snohomish County area. Service is provided weekdays between 5:30 am and 4:30 pm.
- Tulalip
 - Tulalip Transit provides a free public transportation service Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM – 6:33 PM. Tulalip Transit is designed to provide service to areas of the Tulalip Tribes Reservation that is not currently served by Community Transit. Passengers are picked up at designated bus stops. Route deviation is also provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ of mile of the fixed route, on a first come first serve basis, for passengers that have a scheduled a ride.

Long-Distance Transportation Providers

[Amtrak Cascades](#)

Amtrak Cascades can be accessed through County Connector service in Mount Vernon, Stanwood, and Everett twice daily in route from Seattle to Vancouver BC, as well from Vancouver BC to Seattle. Amtrak Cascades service is ADA compatible but requires attendant notification.

[Greyhound](#)

Greyhound bus service is ADA accessible and available at a variety of stations that can be reached using County Connector services and/or Washington State Ferries. Skagit Station in Mount Vernon, Everett Station, and Port Townsend are the nearest to stations to Island Region.

Greyhound also offers a discount Bolt Bus service, but these only originate in Bellingham or Seattle.

[Airport Shuttle Service](#)

Shuttle service to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and Bellingham International Airport is provided by the Whidbey SeaTac Shuttle. Bellair Airporter Shuttle provides service to SeaTac Airport. Shuttles are ADA accessible, though advanced notice may be required to accommodate some travelers.

Information and Brokerage Service Providers

Information Services providers are organizations that help others with service planning, or by helping riders find available services. Information service providers do not provide transportation services themselves. In Island Region, these include:

Northwest Regional Council

The Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) is Island Region's Area Agency on Aging and serves as a broker for Medicaid transportation (see Box 6), authorizing and arranging transportation for people in Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom counties. The NWRC provides non-ambulance, Medical Assistance Administration Transportation to covered medical service locations. Clients must be eligible for Medicaid and have no other means of transportation.

The NWRC also offers a meals on wheels program. As noted previously, Camano Island is tightly linked with the City of Stanwood. However, Stanwood is part of Snohomish County, which is served by Hopelink, rather than the NWRC. This circumstance creates a barrier to efficient service delivery.

Box 8: Medicare versus Medicaid

Medicare and Medicaid are separate programs with different eligibility requirements. Some individuals may be covered by both programs. Medicare cannot be used to pay for Medicaid transportation

Medicare is a federal insurance program that workers have paid into. Medicare serves covered individuals over 65, younger disabled people, and dialysis patients. Patients pay part of costs. For more information see: <http://www.medicare.gov>.

Medicaid is a federal-state assistance program that varies from state to state. Medicaid serves low-income people of every age. Patients usually pay no part of costs for covered medical expenses though a small co-payment is sometimes required. For more information see: <http://www.medicaid.gov>

The difference in eligibilities can result in inefficiencies, for example, two people departing from the same location for a medical trip, who are bound for similar off-Island destinations, may not be able to travel together. One of these people may be getting Medicaid reimbursement for their trip, while the other may not.

North Sound 2-1-1

North Sound 2-1-1, operated by Volunteers of America, is a one-stop information portal for special needs populations. North Sound 2-1-1 works with callers to identify which transportation services they are eligible for and connects them to those providers. This service is available Monday - Friday between 8:00 am - 5:00pm. Although, Island Region is served by North Sound 211 it is not optimized for Whidbey or Camano Islands at this time.

Island Transit Mobility Specialist

The Island Transit Mobility Specialist is an employee of Island Transit who is responsible for performing outreach and transit training. This position was a recommendation of the previous Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan and was created to address a recognized need in both Skagit and Island counties. The mobility specialist will ride along with new transit riders, showing them how to use the service and host outreach events (at local schools or community centers) to educate people on existing services. For 2018, Island Transit's mobility specialist began running bus tours as a means of introducing transit to wider user group, which often includes older residents.

Northwest Educational Services District #189 (NWESD)

NWESD #189 serves as a link between public schools, private schools and various state and federal agencies. The goal of the NWESD is to help schools work together to provide the best education, as efficiently as possible, by working together to minimize overhead and unnecessary expense and services. Part of this is to help schools provide bus service in an efficient manner. While the NWESD does not directly provide service, it helps coordinate services for schools and provides the following:

- Technical assistance for student transportation operations
- Processing school bus acquisitions and dispositions
- Annual state school bus driver trainer instructor services
- District consultation, site visits and studies

Unmet Transportation Needs

Mobility Needs and Gaps

A primary goal of the various outreach efforts and NSTA workshop participation was to hear about mobility needs and gaps that exist for transportation disadvantaged communities within Island Region. These needs and gaps can generally be grouped into six categories; geographic, temporal, institutional, awareness, infrastructure, and operations/equipment. Category discussions follow, and Table 5 lists identified needs and gaps.

Geographic Gaps

Geographic gaps represent spatial areas that do not have coverage or have limited coverage with respect to public transit. Within the region, Island Transit provides paratransit service to all areas within three quarters of a mile from their fixed route services. Figure 28 shows the areas within Island Region where Island Transit does not provide fixed route or paratransit service. Note that Island Transit's fixed route #3 serves downtown Stanwood (not shown), so limited out-of-jurisdiction paratransit is also provided along that route.

While these geographies represent locations where Island Transit will not pick-up/drop-off paratransit trips, it doesn't mean that people living in these locations have no other transportation options. Other transportation service providers (volunteer services, nonprofit organizations, etc.) help close these geographic gaps, so it is important to better understand the range of services available.

Open House attendees, transit riders, and survey respondents all noted that longer, off-island trips into other jurisdictions are one of the primary difficulties associated with traveling by transit. These trips often require time-consuming and difficult transfers. Poor coordination between service providers further exacerbates this problem as these service providers are often unaware of connecting routes across jurisdictional boundaries (see Box 9). This results in schedules that do not align well and create difficulty for those making long range trips.

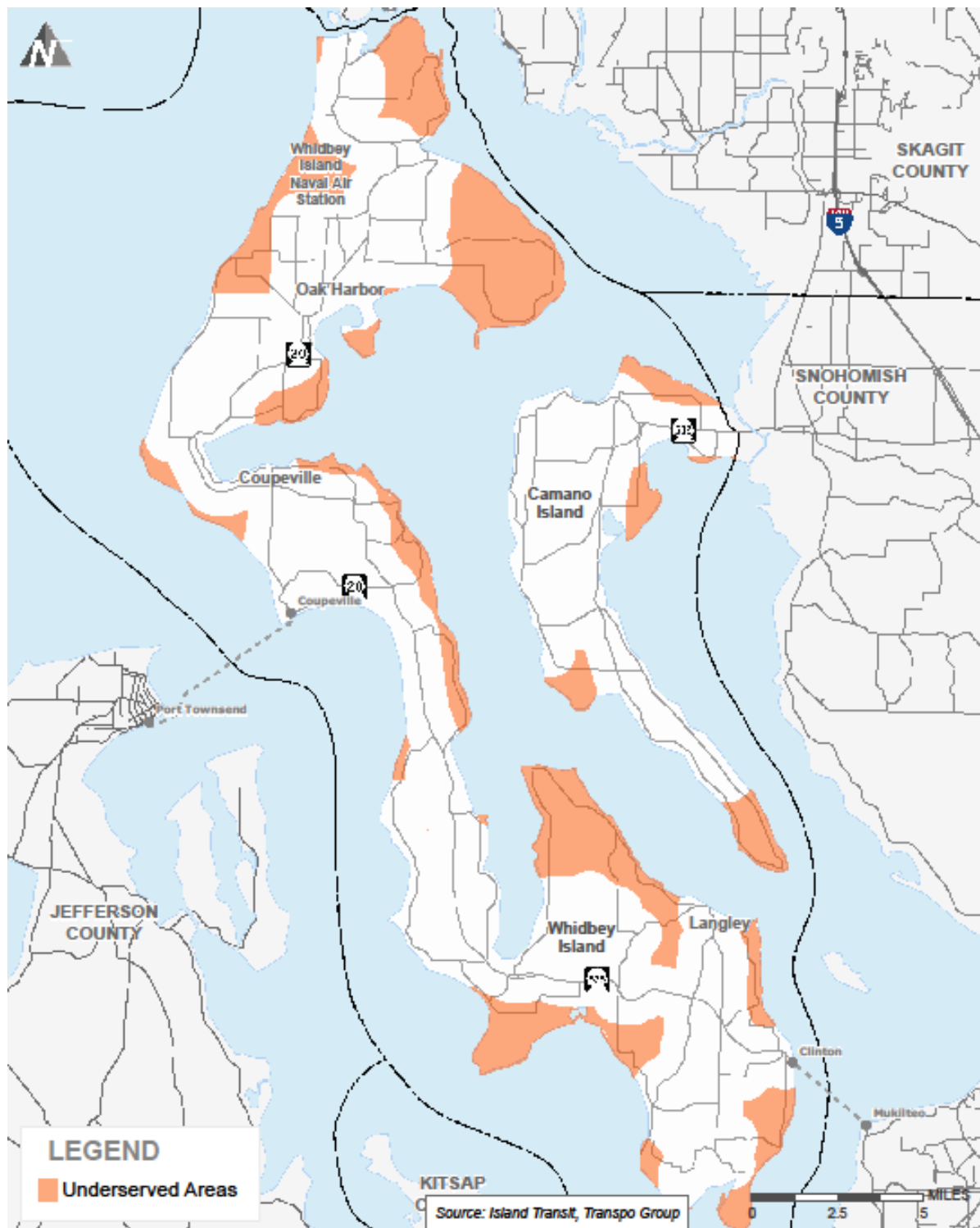


Figure 28. Areas outside paratransit service boundaries. In addition to not being served by fixed route transit, these areas are more than ¼ miles from a fixed route. Trips beginning or ending in these locations must rely on other transportation options (driving, biking, walking) or non-transit transportation services (human services agencies, taxis, services provided by non-profit organizations). Note that Limited paratransit service is also available to the City of Stanwood since Island Transit’s fixed route #3 serves that city’s downtown.

Box 9: Transportation Service Provider Coordination Challenges

In general, transportation services providers make a concerted effort to meet the needs of their patrons and to coordinate between each other when possible. However, coordination is complex and it is important to understand the different perspectives involved with this issue:

1. **Transportation Provider Perspective:** Although a pair of transit agencies may find good coordination solutions issues arise when considering the larger family of transportation service providers (human service organizations, private companies, transit, ferries, etc.). For example, multiple non-profit organizations may be providing services to different clients, while travelling in similar routes. Because we do not have good coordination among those non-profits, we may miss opportunities to share rides. In some cases, it is truly a lack of coordination, but in other situations eligibilities tied to funding may be the barrier. Some opportunities may yet to be explored such as having TNCs (Uber for example) connect riders to transit.
2. **Transportation Operator Perspective:** Different agencies often have different service needs. Camano/Stanwood provides an example of this. There is a need for both local bus service and regional/commuter bus service in this area, and different agencies are trying to balance these different needs and community interests, given funding limitations.
3. **User Perspective:** Users may find that trips crossing transit boundaries are difficult to understand. The different route schedules and payment requirements across systems may be intimidating, costly, or not time efficient. Transit providers work to include information on connection points with other transit providers, but from a user perspective it can still appear very disjointed.

Temporal Gaps

Temporal gaps refer to a lack of service at a desired time and may reflect challenges with the frequency of service or longer time intervals when service is not available (example, night hours or weekends). Such gaps are better understood with respect to public transit service, though once again this underscores the need to explore the broader range of services that might be available from non-profits or on the private side.

Island Transit provides service Monday-Friday from approximately 5:00 AM to 8:00 PM, and a recently re-instated Saturday service from 7:30 AM to approximately 6:30 PM. Based on outreach efforts, this recently added Saturday service was well liked, but some riders noted the limited availability of evening service. Limited evening service not only reduces

mobility options for people who want to use public transit service to get to and from social activities but also makes travelling to and from a non-typical job schedule (9AM-5PM) difficult. Lack of available service on Sundays also limits people's mobility options, especially for social and religious outings. Many of the other identified private and nonprofit service providers only provide rides on weekdays.

Ferry: For Whidbey Islanders, timing considerations may also involve alignment with ferry schedules. Ferry service extends beyond transit service hours and days and even during the transit service hours, not all sailing times can be accommodated with bus service. In addition, summer crowds can cause the ferry to get off-schedule, which impacts transit connections.

Schools: Apart from typical workday commuting, Island Transit fixed route services are often used by students commuting to and from school. Transit schedules often are not aligned with school schedules, such that students either arrive very early or late to school or must wait after school for long periods of time before catching a bus. This is especially true for students coming from out of district. Buildings are not usually open to accommodate these early/late arrivals or late departures. While issues with transit access to school are recognized here, it should be noted that school districts are the primary resource for ensuring students can get to school (see pages 58 and 59).

Other: For other special needs services, like Veterans Affairs (VA) shuttles, many schedules do not accommodate the needs of the user. Veterans commented during the outreach process that VA vans leave on fixed schedules – often early in the morning to get off Island and return mid-afternoon, regardless of when the user needs to be at their given appointment. This can result in veterans arriving at medical appointments hours early and possibly missing the shuttle to get home because of an appointment time that is late in the day.

Institutional Gaps

Institutional Gaps are caused by regulations, rules and requirements on transportation providers that limit their ability to provide services. These barriers can sometimes result in transportation service that can be confusing, inefficient and difficult for users. Specialized transportation providers frequently rely on federal funding to maintain their services, which have specific eligibility requirements. Differing eligibilities among individuals needing transportation can make it difficult to pool rides to and from common locations.

In Island Region, one of the primary concerns regarding specialized transportation services is the increase in service that will be needed to account for the growth in elderly residents. As shown in Figure 1 (page 13), the number of residents aged 75 and older is expected to more than double by 2035 which is expected to require dramatic expansion of services for the elderly.

Most transportation services rely on some form of government funding to continue providing service year to year. This source of revenue is unreliable, as grants are often competitive, and make maintaining service a challenge. During outreach events, service providers commented that while they have typically been successful in receiving grant awards each year, the amount of money received has not changed for decades – making it increasingly difficult to provide services as the cost of vehicles, fuel and wages have increased.

Awareness Gaps

Awareness gaps result in two challenges with respect to special needs transportation: lack of access to information and customer perception of available service.

Although transportation service information may be available, clients may not know where to find it. In other cases the information itself is missing or out of date. These issues are illustrated by the current 211 service for Island Region. The service, accessed by dialing 211, is intended to be a 'one stop shop' for obtaining specialized transportation information. The service maintains a list of transportation providers and the services they offer. However, information is often out of date and inaccurate with respect to Island Region. Program coordinators are aware of this gap and hope to improve that service.

Sometimes potential service users may be aware that services exist, but lack the technology (such as cell phones with data plans) to access it or have trouble using available technology tools. Many trip planning apps exist, but they may not work well for special needs populations. Apps may be difficult to use and non-comprehensive. Even for clients with cell phones and data plans, connectivity issues are often a problem in rural areas. The challenges with trip planning technology and centralized information hubs not only adversely affects users, it complicates informed program investment decisions. If a service exists, but target groups are not finding it or understanding how to use it, the service may be inaccurately perceived as undesirable.

Transportation services may be seen as undesirable in general. Customer perceptions of transit are not always favorable, particularly for those who have limited experience with transit, such as elderly individuals who have spent a lifetime driving or being driven. Misconceptions about transit may prevent some individuals from considering the option and breaking down those barriers can be challenging.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure gaps could include a variety of concerns with regard to access, safety, or comfort for fixed structures associated with transportation right of ways. In the context of special needs transportation, infrastructure issues more likely refer to gaps affecting walking, bicycling, or use of assistive mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Infrastructure gaps can be significant barriers to those with specialized transportation needs. In Island County, one of the primary infrastructure barriers is a lack of adequate first and last mile connections to transit stops.

All transit riders benefit from safe and comfortable walking and bicycling access improvements at bus stops, however this is especially true for those with mobility impairments. Disabled riders who are not eligible for paratransit service due to non-qualifying disabilities or being outside service boundaries provided by Island Transit may need to use a walker or wheelchair to reach a bus stop. Improving first and last mile connections enables more people to access existing transit options and may help increase ridership without expansion of service areas.

First/last mile infrastructure often brings to mind ADA ramps, sidewalks and other urban-type improvements. However, many Island Region residents live outside urban areas and they may need to travel more than a mile to reach a bus stop. Improvements such as shoulder widening, and additional lighting may be helpful to those who walk or ride a bike for longer distances to reach their bus. In addition, new non-motorized connections (across a large field for example) can reduce the overall distance a walker or bicyclist needs to travel to reach their stop.

Other infrastructure gaps include minimal bus stop facilities and inadequate park and ride facilities. Many bus stop facilities do not have shelters, places to lock a bicycle, or even a place to sit while waiting for the bus. A place to sit is especially important for seniors and people with disabilities who may not be able to stand for extended periods of time while waiting for service.

One of the most prevalent infrastructure gaps for specialized transportation is the need for fleet replacement. Vehicles have limited lifespans and require

maintenance and replacement, which can be a major cost for small service providers. These costs are a significant barrier to service expansion.

Operations/Equipment Gaps

Operations gaps include transportation barriers associated with the ability to provide a given service or make that service useful and appealing to those who use it. Related to operations, gaps in equipment availability such as accessible vehicles reduces efficient delivery of services.

Box 10: A Lack of Volunteer Drivers

Regional Senior Centers have found creative ways to fund services for vulnerable populations and seniors in particular. But, a lack of volunteer drivers and an increasing need in the community is presenting challenges.

As an example, Camano Center, uses thrift store revenue to fund transportation for seniors to access shopping, pharmacies, medical appointments and even social functions. The Center has been able to pick up clients at various times from all over Camano Island to transport them to and from their destinations.

However, changing demographics have increased the demand, even as the volunteer driver pool has shrunk to about half of what it once was due to the aging of volunteers who become clients themselves. The center's executive director is now looking at more of a scheduled, bus-type service to address the need.

Many non-profit service providers rely on volunteer drivers which can present a series of challenges (see Box 10). Volunteer drivers often are unable or unwilling to assist passengers who may require special assistance. Volunteer drivers make themselves available to help and assist whenever they can or want, which may not align with when services are required. Additionally, many service providers noted that finding enough volunteer drivers was a significant challenge. Most of the volunteer drivers, like many of the clients they serve, are older retired individuals who may have physical limitations.

Table 5 Identified Needs and Gaps for Island Region	
Geographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to transit and/or paratransit is limited • Some areas fall outside of ¾ mile Paratransit boundary • Veteran transport does not stop in Skagit County • Cross jurisdictional trips are lengthy and require awkward transfers • Cross jurisdictional trips underserve non-urban destinations • Limited in-region services require out of region travel • Some areas lack transportation services • Longer cross-regional trips need to be more seamless • Lack of access to grocery, food banks, pharmacy • Rural areas have limited volunteers pool
Temporal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday service ends too early and there is no Sunday service • Patients can't get home after appointments • Greater frequency needed for County Connectors • Saturday evening service and Sunday service gap • Volunteers must commit to all-day or daily trips for medical appointments • Trips requires pre-planning to schedule rides (paratransit)
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General awareness of available services may be low for everyone involved • Need better knowledge of service area gaps • Need better knowledge regulatory barriers to certain travel • Lack understanding of how private/public transportation services overlap • Unaware of how to best coordinate between service providers • Public does not believe that Sunday service is actually possible • Cultural barrier to taking public transit • Former drivers (elderly) lack experience with transportation services • Language barriers for materials/information • People don't understand how to access the various available services • Greater need for travel training • Resident participation in planning and plan awareness is low • Some clients may need point to point transportation • Nonprofits need better understanding of lowest cost solutions • Confusing eligibility requirements for transportation services • Interisland barrier, reduces region-wide communication of needs • Need data: how many are underserved/not reaching appointments, etc. • Cascade effect for cycle of care or legal impact of missing one appointment
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing need (85+) requires service expansion • Paratransit doesn't follow County Connectors outside boundaries • Veterans Administration programs are all outside Island County • No one stop shop for transportation information • Disabled American Veterans services have limited appointment window • High cost of medical transportation for non-Medicaid patients • High cost of non-emergency transportation services to seniors • Delays in authorization from Medicaid • Medicaid doesn't pay for getting home after discharge • Funding sources are often grant-based and time limited • Grant award levels do not keep up with project cost increases • Barriers against providing used transit vans to community groups • Often difficult to pool rides due to eligibilities • No passenger ferry options • Transit may be difficult for frail riders or those with mental health issues

Table 5 Source: Surveys, workshops, Health & Transportation Workshop

Table 5 continued Identified Needs and Gaps for Island Region	
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing bus stop facilities need improvements • Need for new/expanded park and rides • Need for new transfer stations • First-and-last mile connections need improvement • Rural cell & internet connectivity is poor • Lack of non-motorized connections may increase trip distance
Operations/Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of volunteer drivers, including those comfortable with special needs clients • Need for more volunteer driver training • 211 not well maintained in Island County • Limited trip planning technology in the hands of users • Trip planning technology is complex • Transportation from correctional facilities to home is not coordinated • Lack of tele-medicine may result in unnecessary trip making • Bus and ferry trips do not always align • Multiple transfers are needed for many trips • Cross region travel lacks fare coordination • Fare systems not coordinated across boundaries (no cross-county transfers) • High cost of one fare solutions like Orca for transit agencies • Aging vehicle fleet • Disabled American Veterans vans do not have ADA capabilities

Table 5 Source: Surveys, workshops, Health & Transportation Workshop

Transportation Service Needs Index

An effort was made to establish an overall transportation service needs index. The needs indexes were created by overlaying the following demographics: low income, no access to a vehicle, disability and age 85 and older. Two versions were developed to provide a geographic overview of where the need for specialized transportation services may be greatest. The depiction in Figure 30, emphasized the age 85+ category, while Figure 31 emphasized low-income. The emphasis on 85+ reflects the fact that Island Region's population of older individuals is larger and growing faster than all other special needs categories. The second emphasis on low-income populations recognizes that the needs of very low income individuals are currently having a greater impact on the region's human services resources.

TEC members expressed concern regarding both transportation service needs index versions. Some of the census block groups that identified a higher need for services, were described as higher income areas, by those familiar with those areas. The mismatch could reflect the need to adjust weighting factors further, or be due to the size of block groups relative to the population. Future efforts might concentrate on paratransit gaps and distance to fixed route transit relative to the size/category of target

populations. Then further analysis could determine if other services are bridging those gaps and how new services could address gaps.

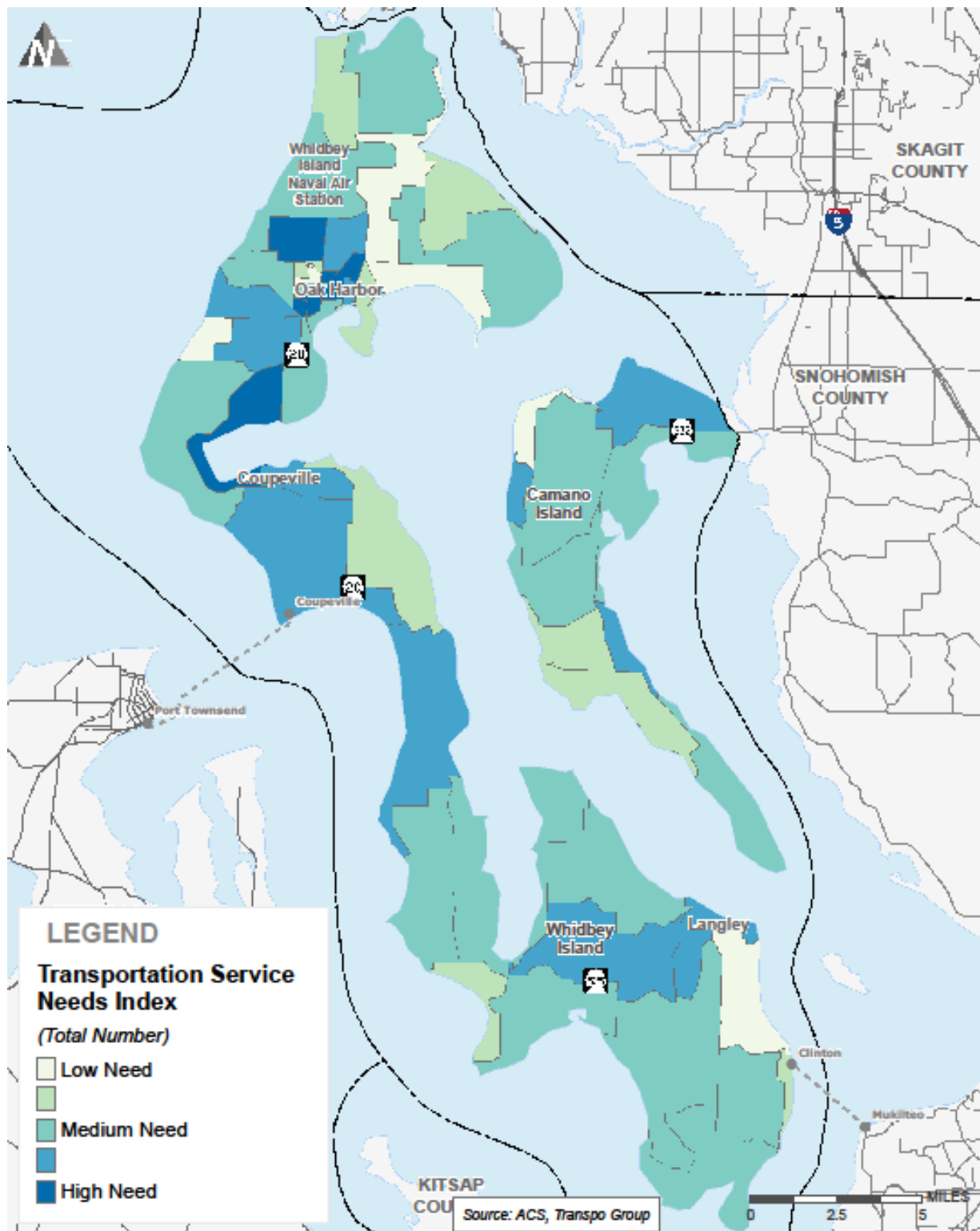


Figure 29. Transportation service needs index emphasizing age 85+. The index was built by assigning a 1 to 5 score to each of the four input demographics within each census block group. The 1 to 5 score is determined by sorting each demographic characteristic from highest value to lowest, then assigning a 5 to the top 20 percent of census block groups, a 4 to the next 20 percent and so on. The needs index is then calculated based on the following formula: Service Need = Low Income Score + Disability Score + Vehicle Access Score + (1.2 x Aged 85+ Score) Based on feedback received from outreach events, emphasis was placed on the 85 and older category (as seen by the 1.2 multiplication factor).

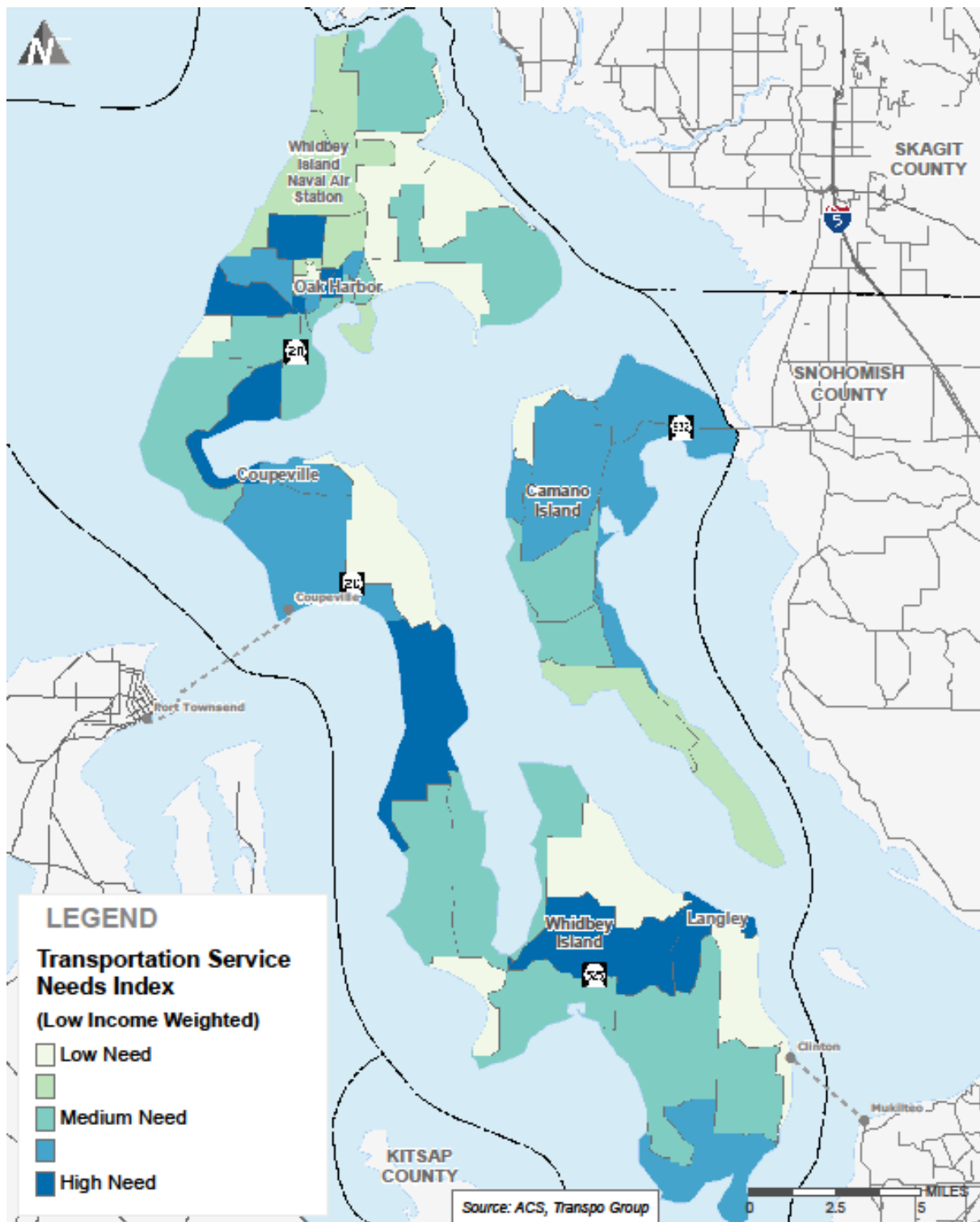


Figure 30. Transportation service needs index emphasizing low-income populations. The needs index was built by assigning a 1 to 5 score to each of four input demographics (see formula) within each census block group. The 1 to 5 score is determined by sorting each demographic characteristic from highest value to lowest, then assigning a 5 to the top 20 percent of census block groups, a 4 to the next 20 percent and so on. The needs index is then calculated based on the following formula: $\text{Service Need} = (1.2 \times \text{Low Income Score}) + \text{Disability Score} + \text{Vehicle Access Score} + \text{Aged 85+ Score}$. Based on feedback received from outreach events, emphasis for this depiction was placed on the low-income category (as seen by the 1.2 multiplication factor).

Family of transportation services addresses needs and gaps

Recognizing that no one transportation solution fits all community transportation needs, it is vital that a broad range of options are available in order to ensure that Island Region residents have choices about the transportation service that best meets their abilities and needs. Referred to as a 'Family of Transportation Services' by United We Ride, a federal interagency initiative that coordinates human services transportation, these services can include intercity bus and rail, fixed route, route deviated, shuttle, demand response, taxi, vanpools, rideshare, volunteer driver programs, and others. Mobility management programs are also considered part of this family. Box 11 provides an overview of different services and programs that fall under the Family of Transportation Services.

Box 11: Family of Transportation Services

A Family of Transportation Services may include:

Fixed-route transit: Public transportation service provided in vehicles operated along predetermined routes according to a fixed schedule.

ADA complementary paratransit: Transportation services for individuals who have a disability that prevents them from independently using regular fixed-route transit services.

Demand-responsive: Non-fixed route system of transporting individuals that requires advanced scheduling. An advance request for service is a key characteristic of demand-responsive service provided by public entities, nonprofits, and private providers.

Deviated fixed-route service: A hybrid of fixed-route and demand-response services. With this type of service, a bus or van stops at fixed points and keeps to a timetable but can deviate its course between two stops to go to a specific location for a pre-scheduled request.

Microtransit: Technology-enabled private multi-passenger transportation services that serve passengers using dynamically generated routes, and that expect passengers to make their way to and from common pick-up or drop-off points.

Intercity transportation: Long distance service provided between cities, often as part of a large network of intercity bus operators.

Rail transit: A wide range of rail services including commuter rail, heavy rail, and light rail.

Box 1 continued on next page

Box 11 continued: Family of Transportation Services

Human services transportation: Transportation for clients of a specific human or social service agency that is usually limited to a specific trip purpose. Human service agency trips are often provided under contract to a human service agency and may be provided exclusively or rideshared with other human service agencies or general public service.

Special shuttle service: Transportation services provided by faith, community, business, and other organizations to specific destinations.

Volunteer driver programs: Services that use unpaid assistants or drivers to provide transportation.

Travel training: Assistance in using available transportation options.

Car and vanpool programs: Ridesharing targeted at getting individuals to jobs, training, and special activities.

Vehicle-sharing programs: A service that provides specific access to cars for certain trip making without requiring the purchase of an automobile.

Accessible taxi: Vehicle licensed to provide on-demand taxi service for people with disabilities and older adults. An accessible taxi accommodates a passenger in his/her wheelchair while in the vehicle and meets requirements for lifts, ramps, and securement systems as specified in the Federal Code of Regulations.

Education, information, and outreach: Travel information for people with sensory, cognitive, linguistic, or other disabilities.

Pedestrian/bike facilities: Infrastructure such as sidewalks, stops, traffic signals, and other provisions that encourage pedestrian and bike access that connect to other transportation services.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS): A customer-focused interface that incorporates multiple mobility options into a single, intuitive and seamless platform or app that allows for choosing the right option, scheduling and paying for that option.

Technology-Based Solutions

Advances in technology, particularly around Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), Computer Aided Dispatch and Traveler Information Systems have given transit providers new tools to better operate, plan and manage their bus fleets. The deployment of technology in the transportation sector is broadly categorized as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

Implementation of ITS, helps improve the efficiency of operations, ease of use, safety and quality of experience for transit riders.

In 2018, Island Transit implemented Route Shout, a real-time bus location tracker application for mobile devices. Route Shout addresses a frequent rider request from the 2014 outreach effort. This information helps reduce anxiety for riders when transferring between buses or between the bus system and Washington State Ferries. It also helps riders deal with transit services delays or know if they have missed their bus. WSDOT has developed a statewide ITS architecture plan, which includes a list of potential future ITS investments, including ITS investments in transit. Below is a summary of existing and planned ITS projects by Island Transit.

Island Transit ITS

The information below was documented in the Island Transit ITS Inventory, compiled January 2019.

Existing Technology

- All fixed-route and paratransit vehicles have AVL with Mobile Data Terminals
- Video monitoring at:
 - Harbor Station Transit Center (Oak Harbor)
 - Prairie Station Transit Park (Coupeville)
 - Noble Creek Transit Park (Langley)
 - Whidbey Main Base Facilities (Coupeville)
 - Satellite Base Facilities (Camano)
- Radio over Internet Protocol (ROIP) to improve radio communication
- Trip planning through Google Transit
- Real-time bus location tracker utilizing RouteShout mobile app

Planned Projects

- Installation of additional repeaters for ROIP
- Expanded video monitoring at Park & Rides locations

Potential Projects

The projects below have been identified as potential future projects based on the Island Transit ITS inventory.

- Installation of real-time security audio and video streaming from buses
- Installation of in-bus automated stop announcement system and destination reader boards

Coordination with Emergency Management Agencies

Island Region is vulnerable to a number of emergency threats, from hazardous storms causing blackouts, tree falls, damage to shoreline dwellings, and impassable roads, to more severe threats such as earthquakes and tsunamis. The islands have only four points of entry: two bridges and two ferries, so there are limited options for evacuation or to get supplies to the islands.

While ferries may seem less vulnerable to certain kinds of disasters, the terminals are a separate concern. For the terminals relevant to Island Region, only the Coupeville terminal is considered ready for a potential earthquake. The Mukilteo facilities are being replaced in 2019/20, but the Clinton and Port Townsend facilities are not targeted for upgrades in the near future.

Many people take mobility for granted and only become aware of transportation system vulnerabilities during an emergency. In rural areas like Island Region, personal vehicles convey a sense of autonomy. However, downed trees or ferry breakdowns can highlight how reliant all people are on a well-maintained, fully operational system. During emergencies, many people may become temporarily transportation disadvantaged, such as when impassable roads force people to walk or use a bicycle to obtain basic needs.

Relative to the broader population, some individuals who rely on the human services transportation system, such as the medically frail, may be at even higher risk during emergencies. This is particularly true if they are required to evacuate their home, or need to reach a critical service such as dialysis.

In addition to acting as the lead agency for the IRTPO, Island County takes an active role in emergency preparation. Island County Department of

Box 12: Emergency Management Coordination in Island Region

The MRSC indicates: RCW 38.52.070 and chapter 118-30 WAC require each “political subdivision” (defined as any city, town, or county) to establish a local emergency management organization or to be a member of a joint local emergency management organization.

At present, two organizations maintain Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans in Island Region: Island County and The City of Oak Harbor. In addition, Naval Air Station Whidbey has an Emergency Management Office that supports base operations, and Navy families. The Oak Harbor plan references coordination with Island County’s plan.

The Town of Coupeville and City of Langley have volunteer programs in place to support the community until Island County’s Department of Emergency Management arrives. In addition, work is in progress to establish a joint local emergency management organization with these smaller municipalities.

All of the regional emergency management leads work closely together to ensure efforts are coordinated.

Emergency Management, as well as other agencies (see Box 12) have developed plans that identify key agencies, agency roles, communication channels, and responsibilities for a range of emergency response measures, including for transportation.

Three emergency management plans were identified for Island Region:

- Island County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (2018)
- City of Oak Harbor Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (2013)
- Regional Catastrophic Disaster Coordination Plan: Appendix B, Island County (2014)

The Island County plan identifies a transportation coordination role for Island Transit. Once the Emergency Operations Center has been activated, Island County Public Works and Island Transit share responsibility for coordinating transportation. Public Works addresses road passage, equipment and supplies, and Island Transit moves the people. Additional organizations have also been identified as transportation resources during an emergency, including: School Districts, Oak Harbor Senior Center, the Whidbey SeaTac Shuttle, as well as several churches.

The Oak Harbor Plan identifies the Fire Chief as the Director of Emergency Services and discusses coordination with Island County Emergency Management. The plan's transportation component indicates that users of transportation systems, or carriers, are responsible for establishing their own internal transportation procedures. Automobiles, vans, buses and light trucks are identified as the primary means of transporting people. Provisions for evacuating individuals with special needs, and use of mass transit relocate them, would be handled on a case by case basis.

The Regional Catastrophic Disaster Coordination Plan: Appendix B, Island County, identifies scenarios in which land connections to Whidbey or Camano Island are destroyed. In addition to a primary coordination role for Island County Department of Emergency Services, this plan also identifies Island Transit as an emergency operations participant with responsibility for providing increased or new transit service to ferry terminals. The plan also looks at the role of ferries to facilitate transportation. For Whidbey Island, increased service by Washington State Ferries is identified. For Camano Island, passenger only ferry service is described, with landing sites at the Maple Grove Boat Launch or Island Yacht Club. Such service would require construction of a floating dock.

In addition to transportation services, vulnerable populations may require many other forms of assistance, such as shelter. The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans address such needs in accordance with RCW 38.52. As an example, Island County Parks & Recreation and Human Services are identified as coordinating emergency shelters.

Memorandums of Understanding

While the aforementioned plans exist, no interlocal agreement or Memorandums Of Understanding (MOU) have been developed between Island Transit, or other transportation providers, and Island County or the City of Oak Harbor. The Washington Mutual Aid System enables counties and municipalities to share resources during emergencies, but this does not extend to other organizations. State guidance suggests that formal agreements be developed to ensure mutual and clear understanding of Island Transit's role, abilities and responsibilities during an emergency. Efforts to establish MOUs have been complicated by the need to specify the conditions under which they apply given the range of emergency situations that may arise.

Emergency Management Needs

Island County Emergency Management identified the following needs with respect to emergency preparedness for special needs populations:

- Memorandums Of Understanding between transportation service providers and emergency management
- Establish a joint emergency management organization between Island County, Town of Coupeville, and City of Langley
 - Washington Mutual Aid System enables counties, cities, and towns to share resources during emergencies or anticipated exercises
- A more complete inventory of all accessible vehicles
- Increased coordination between emergency management and human services agencies/organizations
- Better knowledge of individuals who will need assistance

Regarding the final bullet “knowledge of individuals who will need assistance” there is a need to address registry concerns. In addition to HIPAA regulations that limit the ability to identify specific disabilities, some individuals wish to maintain their privacy rather than being placed on a list. There is also the concern that listing individuals will create unrealistic expectations. Given the availability of resources in a mostly rural region, and the time required to reach some of those in need, it is important that all Island Region residents make personal plans for their safety and the safety of their loved ones.

Emergency management indicates that efforts to address the above needs have been initiated and programs have been funded. Progress is expected to be made following a staffing increase that became effective in 2019.

Regional Awareness of Island HSTP by Emergency Service Providers

To ensure that human services transportation providers are part of the emergency planning work, state planning guidance requires that emergency planners are made aware of the HSTPs developed by agencies within their jurisdiction. Island Transit has already been engaged in local emergency comprehensive planning efforts. Emergency management groups have been involved in the development of this plan. Island RTPO will share the adopted plan and communicate the importance of continued engagement.

Strategies To Meet Public Transportation Needs

Strategy Development Process

Strategy development followed a collaborative and iterative process between two divisions of the TEC (Whidbey and Camano groups) and the IRTPO Executive Board. The TEC reviewed 2010 and 2014 plan strategies and the needs and gaps identified through the NSTA Health and Transportation Workshop and the 2018 Special Needs Transportation project outreach efforts. TEC members and Board members felt that strategies should be broad, versus specific to provide the flexibility needed to bring new project ideas and potentially new sponsors to the table.

While strategy statements were broad in scope, operational definitions helped to provide a common understanding that facilitated strategy prioritization and project scoring. Prioritization began with a TEC weighting activity that involved a forced pairs approach to comparing strategies. Individual efforts were followed by discussion aimed at reaching consensus. The process ensured that each strategy was considered against all others, by all participants and the final ranking recommendations were then combined for each group. The process was challenging for TEC participants, but helped to underscore the value that each of the strategies contained. The Executive Board reviewed and accepted final ranking recommendations. Final, prioritized strategies are shown in Table 6 and strategy definitions follow after. Table 7 shows the weighting percentage determined for each strategy.

Table 6 Strategy (shorthand name and full text)		
<div> Higher ↑ RANKING ↓ Lower </div>	Preservation	Preserve existing services
	Regional Connectivity	Improve Regional Connections (including ferry considerations)
	First/Last Mile Connectivity	Encourage services, programs, and infrastructure development that support first/last mile connectivity
	Partner Collaboration	Develop a partner collaboration program
	Expansion	Expand existing services (including specialized transportation, veteran transport and access to underserved areas)
	Easy Information Access	Develop coordinated information resources and trip simplification tools
	Creative Funding	Explore new funding models and opportunities
	Minimize Travel Distance	Reduce need for long distance travel
	Innovation	Promote innovative programs, processes, and technologies
	Disaster Preparation	Promote transportation resiliency and alternative travel options for vulnerable populations with regard to disasters
	Outreach/Education	Foster increased use of existing services through outreach and education
	Driver Recruitment/Training	Establish systems for driver recruitment and training (paid & volunteer)

(Preservation) Preserve existing services

Grant applications, local outreach and coordination efforts with other agencies within (or outside) the region should be focused on identifying ways to support transportation service providers such that current levels of service can be maintained. In addition to routing and frequency, preservation includes maintaining and/or replacing the bus fleet and support facilities to ensure a state of good repair, maintaining and building adequate capital reserves to fund fleet replacement, conducting planning and other support tasks necessary to maintain service. It should be recognized that, for a specific system user, preservation efforts may unintentionally introduce new trip challenges. However in some cases, adjustments to provider routing, schedules and operations due to inefficiencies or suboptimal connections with many system users, may be considered preservation.

(Regional Connectivity) Improve Regional Connections (including ferry considerations)

The need for connectivity to other systems or services is especially acute for Island Region which is given that core services (medical, employment, social service programs, education facilities, recreation) are spread throughout the immediate region and beyond. Improving regional connections may include coverage, span, or frequency (discussed under expansion), but also considers operational coordination or cooperative funding efforts with service providers outside of Island Region such as private transportation service providers, transit agencies or Washington State Ferries. Some examples of regional connectivity improvements that have been discussed include more frequent service between Whidbey and Camano Islands and Island County and Mount Vernon, better connections with Whatcom and Snohomish Counties, weekend service to Whatcom and Snohomish Counties, improved medical services connections for residents into Seattle or other facilities in King County.

(First/Last Mile Connectivity) Encourage services, programs, and infrastructure development that support first/last mile connectivity

Last-mile connectivity ensures that adequate facilities exist to allow people to walk or bike to transit. The term last-mile may better be captured by the terms “walkshed” and “bikeshed”, which indicate how far people may be inclined to walk or bike to transit. In rural areas a walkshed may extend beyond a mile and a bikeshed may be 2-5 miles. A walkshed will be more transit-user friendly if it includes adequate pedestrian pathways, such as sidewalks, roadway crossings in the area around public transportation access points and amenities such as benches, shelters, and lighting at stops and stations. Providing secure bicycle parking, bike share service and other amenities for bicycle riders at public transportation stops or stations may help those who do not have access to a car. Just as walksheds and

bikesheds may be larger in rural settings, the solutions need to be more creative to be cost effective.

(Partner Collaboration) Develop a partner collaboration program

Partner collaboration involves more deliberate and frequent efforts to foster joint planning and brainstorming efforts between transportation service providers, human services providers and users of the system. Collaboration also highlights data collection needs and the availability of existing data that might open a door to new grant funding opportunities. Other opportunities that could be further developed through workshops include:

- Efficient connections based on creative appointment scheduling and highlighting the role of private operators in the system
- Decision-maker education regarding the interplay between healthcare and transportation

(Expansion) Expand existing services (including specialized transportation, veteran transport and access to underserved areas)

Expansion may emphasize any combination of coverage, span, or frequency. Coverage looks at new service areas (or restoration of historically served areas). Span involves adding days (such as weekends) and/or offering new times (such as evenings) where service is provided. Frequency refers to how often the service is provided within the span of time it is offered (such as a pickup every 30 minutes). Expansion may also include additional stops along existing routes or buying new vehicles to expand services through a new program (such as Ride Link) or investing in technologies to better integrate scheduling and dispatching services.

(Easy Information Access) Develop coordinated information resources and trip simplification tools

There are many tools today for accessing information regarding transportation options. Printed bus schedules, websites and apps are available to assist travelers, but navigating these information tools can be challenging for many users (such as those with language barriers, cognitive issues, or who simply lack online access) and they may not be coordinated across jurisdictions. A one-stop clearinghouse (such as 211) and applications that make information accessible to travelers with special needs are tools that could make travel easier.

(Creative Funding) Explore new funding models and opportunities

Due to mandated planning requirements, human services transportation planning may be more focused on Federal Transit Administration grant funding than other potential sources. Surface Transportation Block Grant funding can also help address infrastructure gaps that support special needs

individuals' access to transportation. Other potential transportation funding sources may exist within healthcare or welfare programs that are currently underutilized.

(Minimize Travel Distance) Reduce need for long distance travel

For residents of large urban areas, local transit, along with walking and bicycling may provide easy access to essential services such as healthcare. However, access to some of the same services require long trips for Island Region residents. Telemedicine, local clinics, local provider reimbursement programs, and mobile clinics all offer the potential to reduce the need for costly, time consuming and logistically problematic long distance travel. Increasing the availability of high speed internet is one tool that could enable more electronic trips. Reducing the need for travel cannot be accomplished with traditional transportation funding or solutions, as it relies on coordination between public and private stakeholders and potentially involves higher level legislative action. Nevertheless, the need for such integrated solutions were identified as a key strategy for making rural communities more sustainable.

(Innovation) Promote innovative programs, processes, and technologies

Many of the transportation systems and programs that are in place have proved effective at meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups. However, new services such as transportation network companies or programs such as Ride Link may make transportation more accessible for everyone. Technology improvements might enable better information access, increase the longevity of vehicles, or improve the comfort of bus stops. Innovative solutions may be new to Island Region, but well-tested in other locations such that they provide promise without substantial risk.

(Disaster Preparation) Promote transportation resiliency and alternative travel options for vulnerable populations with regard to disasters

This strategy recognizes that there is a real risk from earthquakes and tsunamis (or disaster events) in Island Region and it is critical that there be systems in place that facilitate essential travel to access shelter, food, water, and medicine. Such systems must work for all Island Residents, and there may be additional challenges with the transport of special needs individuals or for making such populations aware of safe travel options.

(Outreach/Education) Foster increased use of existing services through outreach and education

Not everyone is aware of the range of existing transportation services and many may lack the skills and confidence to benefit from such services even when they are aware. It is important that both end-users and the people and organizations that interact with them know what services are available and

how to get the information and/or training needed to make those services accessible. Many social service programs support the provision of transportation for their clients, either by providing them with bus passes, gas vouchers, or otherwise financially subsidizing the cost of transportation, especially for those seeking employment. It is important that social services program staff are aware of existing transit services and alternatives so they can better inform their clients about the options available to them.

In addition to more passive advertisement of services and options, increasing public knowledge of comprehensive travel training programs (that consider both public and private transportation options, as well as safe active transportation routes) can increase use of existing services. Social media, mobile workshops (targeting special needs populations and high need areas) and other creative outreach methods are key tools to address the outreach/education strategy. Strong engagement with special needs support networks (such as the Transportation Equity Network) provide an opportunity to increase the pool of trainers.

(Driver Recruitment/Training) Establish systems for driver recruitment and training (paid & volunteer)

Most rural transportation depends on driving and rural locations such as Island Region often have difficulty attracting professional drivers for transit or other services. Even greater challenges exist with recruiting volunteer drivers. One of the most significant issues facing the Island Region is the impact of an aging population, and the current pool of volunteers tend to be older individuals with a narrow volunteer window. Transit drivers are generally well-trained with respect to working with special needs populations, but this is less true for private transportation drivers or volunteers.

Consolidated Grant strategy scoring and weighting

One of the funding sources available for Human Services Transportation projects is the WSDOT Consolidated Grants. These grants incorporated regional project ranking as a major component of the full evaluation. The process used to prioritize the strategies, produced weighting factors that can be used in conjunction with project scoring actions to make final project ranking recommendations. Separating the scoring activity from the weighting simplifies the task for those scoring and reduces scoring irregularities. The strategy weightings are shown in Table 7 and an example score sheet follows in Figure 31.

Table 7 Criteria	%	Rank
Preservation	12.9%	1
Regional Connectivity	12.8%	2
Last Mile Connectivity	11.5%	3
Partner collaboration	8.9%	4
Expansion	8.9%	4
Easy information access	8.6%	5
Creative Funding	8.0%	6
Minimize travel distance	7.1%	7
Innovation	6.9%	8
Disaster Preparation	5.5%	9
Outreach/Education	5.2%	10
Driver recruitment/training	3.5%	11

Island Transit: North Sound Regional Connector					
To provide operating assistance to fund Island Transit's North Sound Regional Connector service. Island Transit operates three routes beyond the established PTBA boundary providing necessary regional connections to Skagit and Snohomish county multi-modal transportation services. Route 411W connects Whidbey Island to Skagit county, Route 411C connects Camano Island to Skagit county, and Route 412 connects Camano Island to Snohomish county.					
Criteria		How this project aligns with identified criteria			
Priority		low	moderate	high	very high
Highest	Preservation	1	2	3	4
	Regional Connectivity	1	2	3	4
	Last Mile Connectivity	1	2	3	4
Medium	Partner Collaboration	1	2	3	4
	Expansion	1	2	3	4
	Easy Information Access	1	2	3	4
	Creative Funding	1	2	3	4
	Minimize Travel Distance	1	2	3	4
	Innovation	1	2	3	4
Lowest	Disaster Preparation	1	2	3	4
	Outreach/Education	1	2	3	4
	Driver Recruitment/Training	1	2	3	4

Figure 31. Sample project scoring sheet.

Community Project Priorities

2018, marked a new call year under WSDOT's Consolidated Grant program and the IRTPO broadly advertised the opportunity through the Executive Board, TAC, TEC and TEN. Although there was no upper limit on the number of project submittals that might be funded under the consolidated grant process, for 2018 Island Region was again allocated nine primary project slots to which the region was tasked with assigning letter grades. Three projects could receive an A grade, three could receive a B, and three others would be designated as C-level projects. Any other submittals would be given D-level status. For WSDOT, the grades translate to points that contribute up to 30% to the score provided to given project as it is compared to all other projects statewide. During the 2018, Island Region received seven project applications from four sponsors:

Island Transit

- Northsound Regional Connector
- Mobility Management Specialist
- 3 Heavy Duty 35' Electric-Hybrid Buses
- 2 Medium Duty Biodiesel Buses

Ryan's House for Youth (RHFY)

- RHFY Transportation Project

Stanwood Community & Senior Center

- North SnoCo Transportation Coalition

Whidbey Homeless Coalition

- Transport for Homeless Guests Utilizing Haven Shelter

The Whidbey Homeless Coalition project submittal was rejected by WSDOT Public Transportation due to an incomplete application. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to address the issue when it was discovered. This left six projects to score. Project descriptions and final ranking are provided in Table 8.

Table 8 Consolidated Grant Project Submittals and Ranking for Island Region				
Rank	Sponsor	Category	Total Cost/ Grant Request	Population Served
1	Island Transit	Continued Operations	SFY 2019-2021 \$2,726,811/ \$2,317,794 SFY 2021-2023 \$2,892,602/ \$2,458,717	All
	Description: 4-Year Request, to provide access to transportation for employment, specialized medical care, access to mental health facilities, educational opportunities, and government and social services that are not available in Island County. This grant sustains existing services which provide for the reduction of nearly 70,000 vehicle trips and 1.3M vehicle miles traveled annually on our congested state and interstate highway systems.			
2	Island Transit	Mobility Management	\$178,704/ \$142,963	Elderly, youth, low income, all residents
	Description: Provides funding assistance to continue mobility management community outreach program. Program increases community awareness of Island Transit services by utilizing a mobility specialist who provides education to individuals, community organizations, and agencies serving the special needs populations			
3	Stanwood Community and Senior Center	Planning	\$50,000/ \$50,000	Seniors, low-income families, other special needs
	Description: Focuses on regional connectivity for Island/Snohomish, Snohomish/Skagit and local service outside ¾ mile paratransit boundary. The goal is to close transportation gaps for vulnerable populations not served by transit			
4	Island Transit	Vehicle	\$2,539,032/ \$2,031,226	All
	Description: Purchase three heavy-duty electric-hybrid buses to replace three diesel-powered vehicles that are beyond useful life. Provides lower-emission electric-hybrid fueled vehicles with lower operating costs			
5	Island Transit	Vehicle	\$403,445/ \$322,756	All
	Description: Purchase of two medium-duty cutaway buses to replace two diesel-powered vehicles that are beyond minimum useful life Lower-emission biodiesel fueled vehicles with lower operating costs, reduced emissions			
6	Ryan's House For Youth	Operations	\$493,212/ \$315,212	Homeless and low income youth / young adults ages 12-24
	Description: Expands staff/volunteer driver program that transports youth and young adults to doctor/counseling appointments, school, employment, etc. Relative to transit, program provides after hours and route extension services.			

Key elements of the HSTP had been developed prior to the call following, broad outreach to end-users and stakeholders. Identified regional needs/gaps were used by the TEC to generate strategy recommendations for the IRTPO Board and project sponsors were able to address these strategies

in their developing applications. Furthermore, ranking of the strategies was finalized well before any project applications were received.

Project sponsors were required to submit a copy of their applications to IRTPO staff and these were advertised on the organization's website (IRTPO Project Development section). Sponsors were also required to create a presentation that was similarly advertised on the website. TEC members then attended a project presentations meeting, held jointly on Whidbey and Camano Islands.

The IRTPO had previously identified 27 possible TEC member participation opportunities that were aligned to a seventeen need categories (See box 13), such as low income, veterans, employment, developmental disability, etc. Both approved stakeholder/organization representatives and/or individuals with special needs could fill those positions and participate in scoring. Project scoring was completed by eight TEC members representing a variety transportation disadvantage groups, including:

- Island County Public Works (infrastructure)
- Stanwood/Camano Senior Resources (low income)
- Camano Center (seniors)
- Ryan's House For Youth (homeless youth)
- SnoIsle Libraries (activities)
- Island Transit (transit x 2)
- Opportunity Council (low income)

In addition to providing an in-person opportunity to hear presentations and score projects, in order to encourage broad participation authorized TEC representatives had the opportunity to review presentations online and submit scores by email. Through these efforts, the TEC was successful in getting two-island participation in scoring with a variety of stakeholders represented. However, greater participation is hoped for and should be possible in the future now that a standing committee (TEC) has been established.

Each project received a score of 1 to 4 for each of the 12 priority strategies. The scores were then weighted according to the established strategy rankings previously shown in Table 7.

Box 13: Island Transportation Equity Committee (ITEC) Positions

Number of Scoring Representatives for each position category* shown in parentheses.

Public Works (1) *infrastructure concerns such as roads, sidewalks, multiuse paths, lighting, etc.* One countywide representative with broad knowledge of public works projects

Human Services (1) A countywide representative with broad knowledge of disadvantaged populations

Veterans Services (2) One countywide representative of veterans with special needs and one other

Developmental Disability (1) *youth and adults* At least one countywide representative

Juvenile & Superior Court (1) *court appointments/post incarceration*

Public Schools (2) *transportation concerns for students/families not addressed by school system* One Whidbey and one Camano Island representative

Homeless (3) *youth, adults and families* One South/Central Whidbey, one North Whidbey and one Stanwood/Camano representative

Low income (2) *youth, adults and families* One Whidbey and one Camano Island representative

Employment (1) *general*

Tribes (1) *disadvantaged Native American residents* At least one representative for Island Region

Limited English Proficiency (1)

Seniors (3) *older adults with disabilities or other transportation limitations* One South/Central Whidbey, one North Whidbey and one Camano Island representative

Healthcare & Acquired Disability (3) *including medical, behavioral, and acquired disability (a least one medical and one behavioral representative)*

Activities (2) *including libraries, recreation, and other social-cultural activities*

Transit (2)

Private Transportation Services (1)

WSDOT Public Transportation (non-voting) WSDOT Northwest Region Public Transportation Liaison

*Note: Categories of representation address a spectrum of transportation concerns including access to basic needs, employment, schooling, healthcare, and social/recreational activities.

Ongoing Coordination

The Island RTPO recognizes the need to support ongoing coordination among stakeholders, vulnerable end-users of the transportation system and the many organizations that serve them. In order to facilitate this essential coordination, support CPT-HSTP plan updates, and to look for avenues to implement potential project recommendations, a standing Transportation Equity Committee (TEC) was formally established in September 2018. This group is currently charged with meeting twice per year. Possible topics for the TEC to begin with:

- Looking at ways to leverage existing resources
- Expanding Transportation Equity Network to include more end-users
- Setting benchmarks for measuring coordination achievements

The TEC provides a ready resource for sharing information among stakeholders and organizations

Title VI requirements

All regions are required to have a CPT-HSTP that complies with federal Title VI non-discrimination requirements. The IRTPO has endeavored to reach out to all represented segments of Island Region as part of its CPT-HSTP process. By conducting community engagement, the IRTPO has provided a comprehensive methodology for ensuring that the public has input and investment into a process that will affect coordinated transportation. Island County is the Lead Agency for the IRTPO and Island County Public Works provides the staff support for that charge.

Title VI Notice to Public

It is the Island Regional Transportation's (IRTPO) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with Island County Public Works Title VI Coordinator. For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact Island County Public Works Title VI Coordinator at (360) 679-7330.

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Potential Special Needs Transportation Projects

Human Services Transportation Plans have generally focused on identifying transportation needs and gaps for vulnerable populations and potential strategies to address them. Project sponsors can draw upon these strategies when considering what projects to put forth for Consolidated Grant funding. Such a focus is valuable, both as a tool to hone in on more effective projects and as a means of applying for an important source of funding. However, the effort employed to generate an HSTP argues that the plan should go beyond its role in serving the Consolidated Grant process. The plan can put forth project recommendations that might be able to use existing funding sources, Consolidated Grant funding or other non-Consolidated Grant funding to advance the goals of the plan. The IRTPO established a standing Transportation Equity Committee (TEC) that will convene to facilitate ongoing conversations around special needs transportation. With the aid of the TEC and available staffing through the IRTPO, Public Health, Human Services, and other organizations, a variety of potential projects may be able to move forward.

Potential Projects

Data

Data Collection: To provide cost effective rural transportation services, and to qualify for certain kinds of funding, providers need more information about who needs those services. Working with partners, more specific data can be collected. For example, veterans services offices might be able to collect the number of veterans requesting transportation services and when. This data would help develop more targeted planning to inform providers where potential service expansions or implementation of innovative services makes the most sense.

Mapping

Trip Origins/Destinations Data: This plan identified limitations with census block group level demographic data mapping with respect to understanding common origins for special needs populations. Looking at block level data may be helpful, but additional resources are likely required to better understand needs and gaps. This project proposes coordinating between Public Health, Human Services, Planning and Public Works to develop finer grained mapping tools. While sensitive data would not be public facing, buffered regions could do a better job of indicating areas where additional attention is warranted. Finer

grained mapping could facilitate transit routing updates, prioritization of non-motorized infrastructure projects (including shoulder widening) and inform outreach efforts.

Non-Transit Transportation Services Areas: This plan was successful in mapping transit services and identifying area gaps in paratransit service. Other volunteer and private transportation services are available, but coverages were not well understood and therefore were not mapped. The transportation services need indexes generated (see Figures 30 and 31) were not as revealing as the planning team had hoped. Future efforts might concentrate on paratransit gaps and distance to fixed route transit relative to the size/category of target populations. Then further analysis could determine if other services are bridging those gaps or how new services could address gaps.

Outreach

Targeted Outreach: This plan was unable to show evidence of successful outreach to populations with limited English proficiency. In addition, there may be other vulnerable populations for whom the planning team's outreach efforts were not as effective. This project would employ non-traditional outreach methods to connect with individuals and communities that are underrepresented. Such outreach efforts would provide a better understanding of our region's needs and gaps, which would inform future planning and strategy prioritization.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Needs and Gaps: This project recommendation could be combined with mapping and outreach projects. Such needs/gaps might be identified as a result of a **Trip Origins Data** project. Public works or transit staff could examine trip origins mapping for potential challenges to people getting around on foot, by bicycle, or with a wheel chair. Infrastructure need/gaps might also be identified through **Targeted Outreach** efforts, especially to underrepresented vulnerable populations.

Coordination

This plan recognizes the benefits of bringing partners and/or system users together to look for new opportunities to address special needs transportation concerns. The success of the North Sound Transportation Alliance's Health and Transportation workshops suggests more localized efforts could also benefit from a targeted

workshop format. Coordination could focus on creative funding, innovative programs, grant writing, public engagement campaigns and other topics that advance transportation options.

Education

Grant Application & Management: Non-profit organizations have expressed interest in applying for Consolidated Grants, but find the process challenging with existing resources. In one case, a completed grant application failed to go through before the deadline due to technical difficulties. This potential project would look at ways to support local non-profits in their efforts to identify competitive projects, complete grant applications, and follow grant requirements if they receive an award.

Transportation Services Training: Another component of education involves providing instruction on what services are available and how to access them for those who work directly with transportation disadvantaged populations. To this end, transportation specialists in the community of Snoqualmie have started a “train the trainers” program so staff are better able to serve their clients. A recent mobility management workshop, identified the possible value of developing a transportation services training video that could reach a wider group of human services providers and also address staff changes.

Veterans Assistance Information

Targeted Veterans Assistance Coordination: One of the largest vulnerable demographic sectors identified for Island Region was the veteran population. This plan discusses some issues, such as long trip times, lack of ADA accessible vehicles and barriers to making trips that do not go all the way to Seattle. However, most of that information came from Whidbey Island residents. Anecdotal reports from Camano, indicate that patients may be able to call for trips to the VA hospital. A targeted veterans assistance coordination effort (including outside of the Island Region) might uncover new transportation service options.